THE REFUSAL.

VOL. I.

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THE

REFUSAL.

BY THE

AUTHOR OF THE "TALE OF THE TIMES,"
"INFIDEL FATHER," &c.

O, momentary grace of mortal man,
Which we more hunt for than the grace of God!
Who builds his hope in air of your fair looks,
Lives like a drunken sailor on the mast,
Ready with every nod to tumble down
Into the fatal bowels of the deep.

Shakespeare.

VOL. I.

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THE

REFUSAL.

INTRODUCTION BY THE EDITOR.

I am afraid of this gunpowder Percy, though he be dead.
What if he should only counterfeit?

SHAKESPEARE.

IT is with the deepest concern that I announce to the public the demise of that inimitable author, Mrs. Prudentia Homespun. Her unrivalled talents and unimpeached celebrity render eulogium impertinent; otherwise I should observe, that she was matchless in taste, unique in style, and absolutely transcendent in every department of literature. Yet, by a singular felicity of temperament, this lofty eminence in the temple of fame did

not in the least injure the engaging simplicity of her character; and, by a rare concurrence of events, she was courted and respected by her superiors, admired and loved by her equals, and revered by her inferiors. Slander never tainted her fame, and envy never haunted her steps. So great was her literary reputation, so enchanting were her manners, that I am convinced the highest connections, and the most lucrative places and pensions, courted her acceptance; nay, (though she never told me so) that she absolutely *refused* many valuable presents. I can only attribute it to some almost blameable peculiarity in her disposition, that she rejected these splendid allurements, and with more than Spartan rigidity spent her life in parsimonious obscurity. I confess, these are conjectures of my own, but I can no otherwise account for such

an author remaining in a first floor at Danbury, during an age so distinguished for its liberal patronage of science and intellect. Probably this mystery will be developed in the next volume of "Public Characters," as that inimitable work is constantly enriched with a profusion of anecdotes, and a disclosure of motives, which absolutely astonish the most intimate associates of the parties of whom they are related.

To return to my lamented, incomparable——friend, I was going to add, but recollecting that such a term might be twisted into an insinuation that I meant to affect reciprocity of character, and knowing that not only humility but also self-abasement is strictly required in every new adventurer on the ocean of literature, I here proclaim, with blushing consciousness, my total unworthiness of that inestim-

able title. No; whatever hereafter I may seem to insinuate, and though for more than twenty years we met every morning to moralize on the increasing faults of our acquaintance; though we prolonged the painful theme till we frequently spoiled our respective mutton steaks, and only parted to meet again in the evening to refresh our harassed spirits with tea, suspend our schemes of reformation till the next day, and adjourn to cribbage; though in talking of human depravity we have grown breathless with virtuous rage, and too indignant to hear each others remarks; though I was the depository of her secrets, the patient and wakeful hearer of all her manuscripts, the nurse of her geraniums and the protectress of her cat during her summer excursions;—though she respected my opinion next to Betty's, and allowed me to be ad-

mitted before she had put on her fly cap in the morning;—notwithstanding all these proofs of esteem, still I will ever say, (as I know I must) that the only weakness I ever discovered in the illustrious Prudentia was her kind partial affection to so stupid, so ignorant, so unworthy a character, as the poor Eleanor Singleton, whose obscure name has been immortalized by being inserted in works destined to last "*till time and language are no more.*"

When my readers and myself have breathed after this formidable period, I must proceed to remark, that these were not the only indubitable proofs of her attachment. My late friend, (gentle reader, after the above abjuration I am authorized to use an epithet so soothing to my feelings) has appointed me her executor and residuary legatee. A mine of wealth is thus

come into my possession, consisting, not of goods and apparel, houses and lands, plate and jewels, but of two scrutoires and five trunks, filled with the unpublished offspring of her prolific pen; ALL of which, with the unwearied perseverance of a laborious editor, I hereby promise to present successively to an admiring and generous public, being fully convinced that my friend could have consigned any of her lucubrations to oblivion, only through excessive modesty, or culpable inertness; foibles which it is my duty to counteract. She indeed fell into the common error of great minds, that of thinking it more improving and gratifying to study what was excellent, than to devour what was new; and she used to talk with great pathos of living authors burying themselves under their own works, and of dead ones being exposed by

their injudicious friends, in a pillory made of the manuscripts they had themselves devoted to the flames.

To justify myself for the steps I mean to take, I shall premise that the conduct of people often differs widely from their avowed opinions. If Mrs. Prudentia really dreaded this posthumous assassination, (as she called it) why did not she destroy every paper in her possession, that being the only certain method of crippling the industry of her editor and bookseller, and disappointing the public, who read nothing with such eagerness as those last words and unfinished fragments, which steal into the world under the interdict of their author. Her careful preservation of these multitudinous writings, convinces me she had a high opinion of their intrinsic worth, and as to their being preserved merely for the perusal of private friends, I con-

fess this appears a very fastidious discrimination, which either conveys a bad compliment to our intimates, by appropriating our stupidity to their sole use, or to the world, by withholding our most delectable dainties from their participation. Being myself of a most frank and communicative disposition, I am resolved to draw these "gems of purest ray serene" from the dark mine where their lustre has been long concealed; and (to come to the point at once) my liberal-minded gentlemen of the trade, who are disposed to purchase secret correspondence, biographical memoirs, sketches of character, ethical fragments, amusing anecdotes, poetical effusions, political guesses, circumstantial details on mysterious subjects, elucidations of popular topics, &c. &c. &c. never intended for publication, and warranted originals by a

celebrated writer lately deceased, are desired to send their proposals, post paid, to Mrs. Eleanor Singleton, at Mrs. Pattypan's, opposite the Blue Lion, Danbury. I scorn to puff my goods, but it is hoped that a delicate attention will be paid to the reputation of the dead, and to the feelings of the living, as, for reasons that must be obvious, I have determined that the best bidder shall be the purchaser.

Certain of receiving numerous applications, and being also well aware of that vile spirit of piracy which prompts surreptitious imitations of the efforts of genius, from pomade divine, and invisible petticoats, to gas lights and metallic tractors, I shall be cautious of making such discoveries of my testamentary wealth as may excite fraudulent plagiarism; I shall only, therefore, inform the world, that in her posthumous compositions,

my friend has fallen into the most popular course of study, I mean a fictitious narrative, adapted to real and well known characters. In these delectable tales, truth and falsehood, calumny and flattery, are blended with such enchanting confusion, that all the world is at once enjoying the exquisite delight of finding out secrets, and hearing scandal, without undergoing the fatigue of morning visits, or evening dissipation. The equivocation of ambiguous delineation is so charmingly preserved in these compositions, that not only are reputations murdered with impunity, but all parties, though looking at the same magic lanthorn, see the caricature of their neighbours, without any one of them perceiving his own. Mrs. Overdo and Lady Fillagree laughed themselves into hysterics at the description of a rout in "A peep behind the Curtain,"

which each of them with well bred deference assigned to the petit souper of her rival, and Miss Imoinda Screechwell employed four mornings in copying the character of Sir Harmony Scaramouch, from "Views of Fashion," under the persuasion that it was designed for her sister's lover, while unhappily all her acquaintance discovered it to be the invulnerable dilettante, at whose heart she had long warbled in vain. Never having had a taste for charades and riddles, I felicitate the public on the enigmatical novelties thus happily brought in to supply the worn-out amusements of our grandmothers, which at best could only be called innocent to counterbalance their numerous disadvantages in putting wit and ingenuity on the stretch. Every body cannot command those qualities, and therefore somebody's self-love must be wounded

by requiring it of them. But the whole circle sits down on equal terms at the modern puzzle, nothing being necessary but a knowledge of the world and a disposition to communicate that knowledge, talents which in the present day all possess excepting just those people whom nobody knows. And as to the comparative innocence of the occupation, why really, though the authors do contrive to catch one leading feature, •or one known anecdote of some demirep or black legs of high ton, to do them justice, they generally distort the former so grossly, and add so much of fiction to the latter, that the real parties are no more delineated than Sir Roger de Coverly was by the sign of his friend the innkeeper. If slander therefore be fiction it is not slander; and this decision rests upon the same ground as the dictum, that it is truth which consti-

tutes a libel. As then we can only injure our neighbours' reputation by describing them as they are, authors may go on making out their winter dainties for summer consumption without fear of injuring the minds of their readers, or impugning their own safety.

My late friend, (who, amid a thousand excellent qualities, was unhappily a little too morose and uncomplying in her morality) was for a long time decidedly averse to this mode of diffusing information and amusement, affirming that these mixtures of fiction and truth tended to check the restraining impulses of laudable shame, and to create the demons they described. But I suspect that a correspondence with her bookseller, which she never permitted me to see, caused an alteration in her opinions; and I think they underwent a complete revolution about the time of the last modification of the

income tax, when the humbler part of the middle classes were so providently removed from all temptation to excess by having every indulgence placed beyond their reach. I think it was just then that my friend changed her bold style of general declamation to petty detail, and preferred aiming at the vicious with a rifle-barrelled gun to opening a battery against vice. How rich a treat of inuendo and surmise may the public expect when I inform them, that she has since that time collected upwards of twelve hundred anecdotes of public characters with no character at all, gentlemen void of gentility, and ladies of repute notoriously disreputable? But wonderful as my friend's industry was, she had supplementary aids which few others could boast. Besides an extensive correspondence with the most penetrating and active of our sisterhood in every county-

town in the kingdom, she was in treaty with the box-keepers at all the theatres, with the most fashionable milliners and toymen, and the mistresses of lodging houses at all public places. Nay, so well known was her thirst for information, that she often received hints from people in very inferior situations, whom the higher orders (from perhaps rather indiscreet generosity) suppose to be deficient in the faculties of seeing and hearing, and whom therefore they allow to witness such venial failings as they would shudder to entrust to their equals. However magnanimous this conduct may appear, I must maintain that it is imprudent; and I would caution the beautiful Lady Tremor not to suffer her waiting-maid to carry the Colonel's billets-doux, lest by some unlucky mistake they should slide into the hand of her Lord. This I know, Mrs. Pru-

dentia received intelligence of the Duchess of P.'s assignation with Lord X. Y. from the hackney-chairman who carried her from the Argyle rooms, and Mr. Lurcher's butler sent a letter to Danbury, certifying the name of the pawnbroker where the family plate was deposited, two days before the Morning Post announced what is termed his bigwig dinner to the ministry. I own it is a shameful infraction of aristocratical privileges, that confidential servants are not prohibited from making observations and drawing conclusions; but as these things will happen in the best regulated families, I can only advise masters and mistresses not to do any thing which they are ashamed to have spoken of, and to keep out of such company as they do not choose to be known to frequent. Such a restriction on our appetites and tem-

pers, though experience proves it to be possible in public, must, I confess, be very difficult in private, and tend so much to substitute the austere substantial virtue, sincerity, for the easy and agreeable one plausibility, that I cannot expect my advice should be adopted. Besides, I admit that a prime source of private emolument and public amusement would thus be cut off; for how could private history be divulged if valets, Abigails, and every species of mercenary dependants and retainers in great families, had nothing outrè to communicate? What a want of polish should we soon discover in the humbler classes of life? Miss Brigetina Trollop, at the green grocer's, would never know that Misses of quality laugh and stare to get lovers, nor could Farmer Breakclod's young Hopeful be aware that when he was stubborn and prophane he shewed the

spirit of a gentleman. Perquisites, too, would be cut off, with the long et cætera of secret service and hush money; and people who see a vast deal of genteel life would be compelled to live on their wages, which are seldom more than double the amount that supports a Welsh clergyman. Indeed, so many inconveniences attend my projects that, like other schemes of reform, I must lay them on the shelf till better times.

But I have wandered from the subject for which I assumed my pen, and must now hasten to discharge my duty by giving some account of the life and opinions of the ever to be lamented Mrs. Prudentia. Of the early part of her history I can say but little: probably she had some cogent reasons for the inviolable taciturnity she preserved on that head. Nor did she ever entertain us with family anecdotes, which

led many to suppose Homespun was only an assumed name; especially as she was never visited by any whom she owned as relations. She had reached fifty when she settled at Danbury, where she avowed her determined predilection for the single state by taking her degree as Mrs. and adopting a large calash, black cardinal, and walking stick, which, her majestic size being considered, gave her rather a formidable appearance. Doubtless these superior attractions, added to the prevailing taste for antiquities, occasioned many painful conflicts between the solicitations of her lovers and her determination in favour of celibacy; but she was too delicate to talk of the offers she received: and though (urged by the tenderest friendship) I once questioned Betty on the subject of her lady's love-letters, the faithful creature affected ignorance. I

cannot but recommend this conduct to all ladies of Mrs. Prudentia's standing; for though I know (observe I do not positively say by experience) that one may make conquests when passed the grand climacteric, it is humane to conceal the agonies, and hide the mortifications of our rejected lovers: besides, girls are sometimes so rude as to laugh "when toothless beauty talks of tearing hearts."

Our intimacy began about this period, one warm day when we were walking on the south side of Mr. Alsop's shrubbery. I was many years Mrs. Prudentia's junior, and for face and nymph-like figure — but I will draw no comparisons, my friend had the beauties of the mind. A rheumatic attack had given a temporary debility to my appearance, of which the good lady took advantage, and beginning

with an oblique sarcasm on my pink bonnet and gauze theresa, somehow in addressing me imperceptibly glided from Miss Nelly to Mrs. Eleanor. I felt a little piqued, but an invitation to attack Capt. Target at Tradrille that afternoon at her lodgings restored my native suavity; and as he joined in laughing at the infantine airs and rainbow dresses of some aged girls of our acquaintance, and swore he would never marry a woman younger than himself, I discarded pink and gauze, and became Mrs. Eleanor twenty years before the accustomed period; but one had better err on the side of over-decorum.

From this time my intimacy with Mrs Prudentia was what I have above described, and I can bear the fullest testimony to the unblemished purity of her morals and manners. No peeping through the sticks of her fan at officers,

no private consultations with spruce barristers and young physicians, no running after handsome preachers under pretence that their discourses were more edifying, no tete-a-tetes with itinerant literati, no conversations with scientific lecturers; nothing dubious or coquetish appeared in her manners, but all was discreet, grave, and irreproachable, worthy the adoption of all the pert forward girls, who in their zeal to catch hearts forget that the hook should never be visible.

But though, like "the fair vestal throned in the west," Mrs. Prudentia "passed on in maiden meditation, fancy free," other parts of her behaviour did a little attract the nibbling malice of puny rivals. She certainly was charged with being an egotist, and too apt to interfere with her neighbours' concerns. It is the duty of friendship to refute calumny, and we

all know that as propriety depends upon circumstances, so motives justify actions. What was right in Fabius, who had a country to defend, would have been wrong in Alexander, who left his to subdue an empire; and if Mrs. Tinto had no other view in visiting Lord Claude than to look at Titian's pictures, pray had her husband any right to turn Othello on the occasion? My friend certainly was a little apt to say, "*I* do this," "This is *my* opinion," and somehow or other, however the conversation began, it generally ended in the superiority of her own productions, proceeding from the piteous tale of Geraldine to her inimitable gingerbread. But then she knew nobody was so well worth talking of as herself, and happy would it be for society if every egotist were a Prudentia Homespun. Nor did her zeal to regulate the world proceed from

censoriousness or impertinence. Her own faults gave her very little trouble, indeed I never could perceive that she knew she had any. Her mind was very active, and she was exempt from all family cares. Of her patriotism I need not produce a stronger instance than that it prompted her to endure a thousand rebuffs, and to awaken a thousand enmities, rather than she would abandon her resolution of never suffering her acquaintance to commit errors without being told of them. Let not man tenaciously refuse the civic wreath to the exertions of our sisterhood in this department. True, we cannot fight our countries' battles with the hero, nor with the disinterested statesman and dauntless patriot sacrifice health, peace, and reputation to legislative duties and political conflicts; but do we not defy rheumatisms and cramps, palsies and asthmas, by sallying

forth in all sorts of weather to collect, or impart, intelligence, to inform the ignorant what their neighbours say of their conduct, and to lower self gratulation by oblique sneers and emphatical inuendos.

Neither can the great public characters I have presumed to allude to, triumph over our equally painful and indefatigable labours, on the pretence that they are unsuccessful; for I fancy these gentlemen, like ourselves, are often condemned to roll a stone up labour-in-vain hill, with a noted poetical projector, and only find their pains rewarded by its tumbling down upon them. People have now acquired an inveterate habit of believing themselves to be the best judges of their own affairs; and though we call upon them in the name of wisdom, and conjure them to listen to our admonitions, they doubt whether we bring proper

credentials from the goddess, except when we happen to think exactly as they do. Even the exalted character of Mrs. Prudentia could not guard her entirely from these accusations; and I must ever deplore the effect of her regulating spirit, as it prematurely deprived the world of its invaluable instructor, and one of the most enchanting of companions, and faultless of friends. Poor soul! she never recovered from the illness occasioned by her plunging through the snow to tell Betsey Boldface, that Mr. Stanza had made a madrigal on her purple elbows. A confirmed cough was the consequence, and her knell was rung out the same day that a bridal peal announced, that Miss Boldface had relieved herself from the terrors of Mr. Stanza's pasquinades by making him lord of her person and fortune. This the Danbury wits call, elbowing

himself into easy circumstances; while the happy pair protest that they owe their present felicity to Mrs. Prudentia's kind interference, and Mrs. Stanza came to church more *a la mode de Venus* than ever: but the honeymoon is not yet over.

Another peculiarity in my friend's character was her dislike of contradiction, which was so rooted that it required some degree of courage to dissent from any of her opinions. In this, as in all her singularities, I am convinced that she only looked to the improvement of the world. What virtue is so estimable as humility, what companionable qualities are more attractive than acquiescence and patience? Can any one hope to rise in the world without these requisites? Could my friend do a greater kindness to her associates than daily to exercise them in those habits which would fit them

for the tables of bashaws of rank and Xantippes of fashion, rich spinster aunts, and testy bachelor uncles? Generously lamenting that the generality of our Danbury beauties were incapacitated from gaining a livelihood by using their hands, she wished to qualify them for that life of dependence to which they seemed partial, by teaching them to hold their tongues. I am sorry to add, that in this instance also her excellent intentions were counteracted by ingratitude. I have seen the chits laugh when she has taken the trouble to harangue for hours on the advantages of silence, and I overheard a pert girl inquire of another tittering flirt, at what age Mrs. Prudentia allowed them to practise talking, preparatory to the very hard service which would be required of them when they must, according to that eloquent line,

"Chatter chatter chatter chatter still?"

I know so little of literati in general, that I am doubtful whether Mrs. Prudentia's morning lounges and evening conversations were unique in their arrangements? She met us at the door of her drawing room, placed us according to the strictest rules of etiquette, and if she had no new work to be admired, or opinion to maintain, she proceeded to form a jury on lives and characters, and tossing the last *faux pas* that had happened in the neighbourhood among us, like her Grace of Stingwell (so forcibly delineated in the present work by her own inimitable pen)* "Cried havock and let slip the dogs of war." It was

* Note by the printer. "This is a mistake of the Editor's. The Duchess of Stingwell is but slightly mentioned in this work, but she will appear at full length in 'The World of Fashion Unmasked,' which Mrs. Eleanor is now editing, and of which it is proposed to print 20,000 copies."

only when we were at fault, or gone off on a wrong scent, that she would attempt to set us right, by a smile or a groan as sententious as the "fudge" of Mr. Burchell. Our debates a little differed from those in a certain great assembly, for though we were also permitted to be vituperative, digressive, elaborate, rhodomontade, and ironical, in fine, to say whatever popped into our heads, whether irrelative or appropriate, no one was compelled to wait for general silence, or even for that of the person they addressed; and it was no unusual thing to see two declaimers, equally loud, talking to, or rather at, each other. But when the tumult of "Yes, madam, this is my opinion;" "Nothing ever was so shocking, sir;" "O most infamous! there can be no doubt;" "Only hear what can be said on the other side:" "'Tis all to no purpose arguing;"

"I never was so sure of any thing in all my life," &c, &c. resounding from twenty different voices, in different keys, conveyed to our delighted minds the deafening luxury of colloquial enjoyment. Suddenly a noise resembling the Euxine sea in full uproar changed to a repose, tranquil as the unebbing waves of the Caspian, when our revered hostess, roused from her apparent reverie, politely told us we were all mistaken.

On other occasions, when we were invited to be hearers, our tongues had no exercise, except to murmur a few acquiescent syllables in admiration of the dictums which were uttered by learning, science, taste, knowledge, genius, virtue, embodied in a Prudentia's form. This exquisite regale lasted till our servants arrived with umbrellas and pattens, when, with ten thousand thanks for the pleasure and

honour we had enjoyed, we adjourned to our own fire-sides. True, we conversed a little in our way home. Blunt characters yawned out an expresssion of weariness, the satirical turned Mrs. Prudentia and her lounge into ridicule, and people of foresight asked if she had a large fortune at her own disposal: Yet all waited impatiently for the next invitation, for my friend's parties were the most genteel in Danbury, and there was no enduring being left out, as none but people of ton and literati were invited.

When the enjoyments of these Attic nights were enhanced, by Mrs. Prudentia's condescending to read some of her manuscripts, we were raised to the zenith of felicity. Never could any author more truly assure the world that she published at the request of her friends than this lady, for we were not only unanimous in our appro-

bation, but unanimous in begging her to publish her works as soon as she had written them, and in predicting that the success of the new bantling would add still greater honours to her laurelled brow. The suavity of our hostess increased in proportion to the ingenuity and plausibility of our oracular decisions. Betty generally received another summons, and we were intreated to take a second macaroon, and another bumper of Clary wine. For it is the same with the offspring of wit as with our living babies, the youngest brat is always the darling.

Conformably, I suppose, to ancient custom, these rites concluded with a sacrifice. Sometimes a rival moralist, gagged and bound, was offered up on the shrine of eulogy: but Mrs. Prudentia had so much of the *esprit du corps* in her disposition, that she preferred hunting down that criminal

which feeds on the vitals of authors, and then gibbets their morbid carcases in derision, I mean a critic, to which species my friend always evinced an antipathy blended with fear and hatred; and, to the eternal honour of Danbury, always declared that our opinion of her compositions was more discriminative, and our encomiums more appropriate, than the most elaborate critiques of the most acute reviewer. She was very partial to what she called arraigning these gentlemen in their own court; for she denied them the benefit of counsel, and of pleading their own cause, acted herself as jury, judge, and executioner, and then, like royalty, gave weight to her sentence by publishing it in the plural number. In imitation of their own customs, (so she assured us) she only read such parts of their strictures as would serve for the basis of a charge

of high crimes and misdemeanours, and by omitting some passages, and heightening others, she pronounced them guilty of treason, sacrilege, envy, stupidity, or any other crime, or absurdity, she happened to fix upon: she then delivered them to run the gauntlet through her delighted auditory, being persuaded that they would find the sensation of being laughed at very amusing, since they are generally so assiduous to procure that gratification for others.

But I am aware this uninterrupted style of panegyric will subject me to the censure which is so commonly, yet surely unjustly, attributed to editors and biographers, who, I conceive, (whatever may be their intention) generally contrive to make their respective authors appear as mere mortals while they hold them up as demi gods. To avert all hazard of this ac-

cusation, I will bring to light two circumstances which impeded the celebrity, and abridged the quantity, of Mrs. Prudentia's writings. She was a disciple of the old aristocratic school, and she had a higher opinion of public taste than of public candour. At least, she thought that the latter was drawn on so much oftener than the former, that there was danger of the bank being exhausted. As the latter notion prevented her from seizing those glorious golden opportunities, which thousands have found so precious, by rapidly pouring forth their impromptus on those all-engrossing topics which sink into oblivion in eight-and-forty hours, so the former opinion absolutely precluded her from giving that high finish to her portraits of people of quality which is now necessary to complete the likeness.

I am concerned to acknowledge, that she knew so little of high life from personal observation, and was so wretchedly opinionated, that she never would believe worse of the great than that they fell into the offences incident to prosperity, and for want of proper self-command were sometimes incorrect in their morals; in short, that lords and ladies were simply men and women. She even insisted, that the man of rank might be distinguished from the porter, even when they both wore Satan's livery. In vain was she told, that the love of novelty now predominates so much that the vices of gentlemen went out with toupies and laced waistcoats, and that the debauchees and bons-vivans of the age did not copy from Petronius, Horace, or Lucullus, but, with the profligacy, adopted the mind and manners of pugilists and coachmen; while de-

mireps and beaux-esprits, not content with being licentious, determined also to be audacious, and thought the deeds of the courtezan not sufficiently disgraceful unless, like them, they bound on impudence as a frontlet. No arguments would convince my friend that such was the general cast of manners. She was firmly convinced, that a plot existed to degrade eminence and annihilate rank, but she never would believe that the intended victims were active agents in the conspiracy, busily employed in expediting their own destruction, by subverting those buttresses of respect and veneration which prevented popular opinion from undermining the ancient fabric of baronial greatness. The times, she said, had disposed her to credit wonders, but not impossibilities, and when the newspapers were produced as evidences of the truth of the charge, she

would either wish the laws againt slander were rigidly inforced, or gravely assert, some "night tripping fairy," or rather wet nurse, "had exchanged the children as they lay," and dropped the pedlar's, or the gipsies', offspring in the cradle of the Plantagenets.

These prejudices, added to her having some scruples respecting the lawfulness of blasphemy, and the decency of double entendres (even though not uttered by the author in propria persona, but put into the mouths of some character to shew wit, courage, and knowledge of the world) made many think my friend's writings cold, bigoted, and ill-timed. From these disadvantages her posthumous works will be exonerated; for as I hold it to be the prime business of a writer to secure readers, I will never impede the success of my labours by fastidiousness about ornaments, over tenacity of

principles, or zeal to defend people who shew they care not what the world says of them. "Sail with the tide," shall be my motto; and though the literary remains of my late friend are to form the vessel in which I embark my fame, I assure the world that I am quite equal to my editorial province of emendation, and, perhaps, may occasionally plead authority if I sometimes do a little more than correct and improve. At least, I may insert what I think Mrs. Prudentia would have said had she been better informed, or had she lived to the present period. New gilt, varnished, and copper-bottomed, under the care of an expert pilot, the old ship Prudentia Homespun shall tack and veer with any light sloop in the service, and, to drop the metaphor, the papers in my possession are so voluminous, that, with the help of a little transposition of

dates, facts, and names, I think I may promise the public to have a novel, satire, elegy, Epithalamium, or ode, ready to issue from the press with the first batch on any great event which engrosses the public, be it a naval victory, a barouche race, or the diamond cross of a prostitute of fashion. Whatever possesses celebrity is fair game to an industrious editor, and to avoid all that punctilio and pertinacity which prevented my friend from turning her talents to the best account, I hereby give notice, that as soon as the unsold copies of this novel are consigned to the trunk-maker, I shall commence the new series of Mrs. Prudentia's lucubrations, in which care will be taken to speak softly of every vice in fashion, and to foment all popular discontents. Dashing girls shall no longer have their spirits curbed by frigid councils, nor ancient ladies be thrown into vapours by

prosings about mortality. The novels I shall hereafter publish in my friend's name shall either be lullabies or stimuli, suited to the hurricane or vacuum of fashionable life; and I invite the world to read them, and see how neatly I can dearn tattered reputations when worth mending, or when irreparable give a jaunty enchanting air to mere rags. I shall also take care to disparage such high desert and spotless purity as are offensive to other people. I will prove my liberality by making my heroine commit a faux pas, and my knowledge of the world by obliging my hero to love her the better for it. In short, whoever wish to have their vices extenuated, their humours flattered, their rivals ridiculed, and the whole arcana of secret intelligence and court intrigue laid open to their inspection, will be my purchasers.

In the present work there are very few touches of my pen. But as I am told it will sell better if I add a key, explaining who are meant by the principal characters, I will not omit so important a part of an editor's duty. Though my friend has owned she did think of some certain people, she never would satisfy my eager inquiries on the subject. The most minute observation has, however, enabled me to develope the mystery, though regard for my own safety compels me to deal in initials. Lady Avondel then is no other than the Countess of X, who was a great fortune, lived with her uncle, and went by the name of good little Emily. A marriage and accouchement actually happened in the Y———p family, and I saw the person she describes as Lord Avondel, covered with the insignia of different orders. I hope I shall not be threatened with a pro-

secution if I whisper, that it was the very celebrated Sir K—v--f Q——m, who died, nobody knows how, in a duel about nobody knows what. Sir Walter Mandeville is the well-known German general Baron Shd——wglph; he wears a Kevenhuller hat, is gouty and asthmatical. It would be dangerous even to hint who was meant for Paulina, and every body knows Lady Mackintosh. The character of Selina puzzled me, till at last I discovered, that it was intended as a delicate tribute to friendship, being no other than my own. My beauty certainly is faded, and the world has not done justice to my merit. I fear I shall be satirized if I say any more on this subject.

I now commend this compendium of secret history to the world with all its imperfections, and I assure the public, that unless some people whom I will not name, make it worth my while

to be silent, I shall next time be less careful about personality. I remain the most devoted servant of the public,

ELEANOR SINGLETON.

INTRODUCTION

BY

MRS. PRUDENTIA.

A FRAGMENT.

There, at one passage oft you might survey,
A lie and truth contending for the way;
And long 'twas doubtful, both so closely pent,
Which first should issue through the narrow vent.
At last agreed, together out they fly
Inseparable now, the truth and lie.

POPE.

——————MR. STANZA, in his reply to the doctor, admitted, that the arguments of his reverend opponent would be unanswerable, if history really possessed all the advantages to which it

pretends; "for certainly, my dear Sir," said he, "I am not such a Quixote in polemics as to dispute the self-evident truism, that truth is preferable to falsehood. I only maintain, that those elaborate quartos which affect to contain the lives of eminent men, or the fortunes of empires, have too much of fable, conjecture, and misrepresentation in them to be justly characterized by so abstract and simple a term as truth. And I also assert, that we shall transgress the laws of candour if we denominate a well-digested fiction, which copies human actions and passions with force and correctness, by the gross appellation of falsehood. In perusing the pages of Fielding, Richardson, and Goldsmith, we always feel in the company of human beings; nay, sometimes among our own acquaintance. We anticipate their sentiments, we know

what they will do, and though occasionally events may be brought about more malapropos, or more adroitly, than we have been accustomed to see in real life, we rather suspect our knowledge of the world is too limited to supply an exact parallel of accidents, than doubt the author's veracity from the improbabilities in his story: I mean while the strong enchantment of genius fascinates our judgment, by introducing the aspect of reality. But, Sir, does this effect take place when we turn over the works of those historians and biographers who set human nature upon stilts, or degrade it to the standard of a pigmy, commanding us to adore absolute perfection, or to execrate the bestial compendium of all imaginable depravity? or of those, who, rather aiming to be ingenious than veracious, shew us that they care not what they establish, so

they do but overthrow preconceived opinions? The difficulty of discovering what is really matter of fact in any event which happens in our own immediate neighbourhood, is obvious. Distance of place increases the danger of misrepresentation, and distance of time still more. Yet, after the lapse of ages, a literary adventurer shall step forth, calling himself an historian, and armed with rhetoric instead of records, give a new turn to facts, and a new colouring to characters, which shall absolutely invalidate the authenticity of contemporary testimony. I will not call Le Sage or Cervantes novelists, but such authors as"—

"My dear sir," said the doctor, breaking silence with unwonted eagerness, "be careful, no names."

"I admire your caution" answered Stanza, "but there is no need of the personal appellative; to name the qua-

lities which they affect is quite as discriminative. When one acknowledged bias to any particular party, or system, is considered as laudable in an historian, you, my good friend, are I know too candid to look into his labours with an expectation of finding them to be the well in which you may discover truth. The pomp of rhetoric, I am sure, will not convince you that the writer is impartial, when you perceive him glossing events to accommodate them to the predominent colour of his work, and omitting those facts which tend to overthrow his darling tenet, and are too stubborn to be moulded into a contrary form. I own I detest an argument whose tendency is to defame the memory of a revered character; and I have equal objections to the exaltation of a villain, when dubious tradition, and strained evidence, are made the supporters of his

greatness. Nay, I go so far as to think, that our veneration for virtue, and abhorrence of vice, are weakened by having our opinions of past generations so frequently unsettled; and I am inclined to adopt the opinion of the lively traveller, who pronounced history the most bewildering, the dullest, gravest, andmost unlikely of all fictions. If Livy be judged to outrage probability, no less in his long harangues than in his prodigies, shall they pass for faithful narrators who, without any authentic document to support their assertions, invent motives which very likely never entered into the minds of the personages to whom they ascribe them, or who, on a few detached circumstances, founded on loose testimony, erect a magnificent system of ideal speculations?" Mr. Stanza then proceeded to quote the well-known lines of Pope, "Ask why from Britain

Cæsar made retreat;" and then finding himself unanswered, continued his Philippic.—

"When an historian has any apparent end in view, whether of aggrandisement or defamation, I always degrade him to the rank of a party writer, and mete out my commendations by the same standard as I apply to an ephemeral pamphleteer, or an acknowledged advocate. On the contrary, when the florid page, unencumbered by references to contemporary authorities and established records, seems only devoted to the innocent purpose of shewing the writer's ingenuity, I try the composition as I would the labours of a poet or a romance writer; and determine its excellence or demerit by the quantity of wit, fancy, and eloquence, it contains. To be brief, I class what are termed popular, well-written histories, with works of mere

entertainment, and I am convinced that those who build their opinions of past times on these inventions, commit as gross an error as the fair enthusiast lady Arabella, who formed her notions of the court of Augustus from the romance of the Empress Julia.*"

No doubt the learned doctor would have completely refuted the assertions of the poet, whose love for Pegasus induced him to maintain that Clio and Calliope were equally partial to his hobby, and allowed him to practice the same antics and curvets under the management of each of them. But his good breeding convinced him that the company were rather over-dosed by Stanza, and as I (hating to see one person engross the whole conversation, or one subject consume an evening) did not give him an encouraging

* The Female Quixote.

glance, he continued silent, taking care, by a significant shake of his head and a quicker 'evolution of his thumbs,' to intimate, that he held Stanza's sentiments in most ineffable contempt.

Not content with a dubious victory, the triumphant poet continued to throw down the gage of controversy with a wish to provoke his sullen adversary to renew the combat. After having proved that we really knew little or nothing of past ages, and shewn, from the nature of things, that little or nothing could be known, he proceeded to question our knowledge of the present; and the obituary of my old friend Urban (whose labours always lie on my tea-table) served him as a textbook. He first read a warm eulogium on Sir Mushroom Treatwell, who, it was affirmed, died universally regretted by a very numerous and respectable acquain a ce.

"Drop the word respectable," said the invidious Stanza, "and there is some truth in the panegyric. The old contractor kept a French cook, and his wines were almost genuine. His house was crowded with needy sycophants, who gave him flattery for his meat, and though they were the sweepings of Grub-street, he really believed that he patronised wit and genius. I went once just to enjoy the singularity of seeing every eye and every word directed to the great man, whose table was furnished like that of Apicius, while his person and conversation exhibited a compound of Scarron and Midas. I could not address my remarks to a fellow whose three ideas centered in being knavish, avaricious, and ostentatious: nor could I listen to the jests of Joe Miller, translated into the cockney idiom. He courted me, 'tis true, for this full blown buffo had

some discernment. But I assure you, Ladies, I was not one of the respectable acquaintance who deplored the loss of Sir Mushroom."

In this satirical style did Stanza run over several columns, proving, to our extreme astonishment, that although you practise every vice, and inherit every meanness, wealth, and an affectation of liberality, will procure you a passable reputation while living, and on your demise give you honourable mention among the records of Britain's true worthies. He then descanted on the folly of parsimony, and the misfortune of indigence, the one in neglecting, and the other in not being able to secure, that rich though ideal possession, fame, when his unmerciful prosing was interrupted by the following simple paragraph,

"On the 27th died, at the house of her nephew, the earl of Avondel, the

right honourable lady Selina Delamore."

"And is nothing said of her ladyship?" inquired the doctor. "At least" said Stanza, "this abstinence of censure obliges us to confess, that the age is as charitable as it is liberal. O tempora, omores, that such a woman should be allowed to steal thus silently to the grave!"

"I presume," said I, "Lady Selina was a very extraordinary character; I wonder I never heard of her."

The sententious doctor turned up his eyes, and admitted it was very wonderful.

"My dear Mrs Prudentia," observed Stanza, who, with all his flippancy and self-conceit, really is well bred, "I am sure your walls are never contaminated by the recital of gross misdemeanours, unaccountable perjuries, breaches of all divine and human laws, of-

fences that burst the very bond of society. Should any one of your visitants attempt to entertain you with an account of such outrages, I am confident your doors would be thenceforth barred against him, whom you would consider as a foul defamer of your species, endeavouring to contract your charity and impugn your candour."

"Unquestionably," said I, "the deeds of such miscreants as you allude to are better concealed from the world, and I exceedingly condemn those who first promulgate them. But though I abhor defamation, when a story is public there is no harm in hearing it. Did you know lady Selina, Sir?"

"No, thank my happier stars," replied Stanza, shrugging his shoulders and rising to take leave.

"Bless me," resumed I, "is her story then so very bad? you might just give one an outline, as there are no young ladies present?"

"It would only divert a Sir Mushroom," answered Stanza, "or such people as love to see the world degraded to their own gross level. You, madam, need no foil to set off your virtues. Celibacy in you shews like the icicle on Dian's temple, and the history of an unhappy spinster who—"

At this critical moment the door opened, fresh company entered, and Stanza retired dumb and mysterious as an ancient oracle. I defy the most illiberal of my acquaintance to charge me with an exuberant share of curiosity, yet, I own, Stanza's complimentary innendo made me a *little* uneasy, I mean for the honour of my sisterhood.

Nor was the doctor more communicative. That worthy gentleman had acquired a reputation for profound learning and wisdom, and he maintained it by reserving these hoards carefully

for his private use. He was particularly cautious not to involve himself in any difficulty by hasty communications, and he has been known to lock the door before he imparted intelligence which was printed in that day's gazette. He would not tell you that the duke of Monmouth was the illegitimate son of Charles the 2d. without the saving clause of "So it was reported;" and I therefore considered it as an extraordinary mark of confidence, that, after several interviews, and much winding and sifting, (at which I claim some share of adroitness) I induced him to commit himself so far as to say, that "Poor lady Selina had been much talked of, and might be said to have two very opposite characters."

I shall not acquaint the world from what source I have since derived such copious and correct information as will

enable me to fill three volumes (allowing for proper margins and amplifications) with the circumstances connected with this extraordinary lady. I am thankful that I am not in the predicament of the historians so severely treated by Stanza. The world has no doubt of my veracity, and they know that when I am barren of materials I *dare not invent.* Nor will I usher in my story with the pomp of supplicatory introduction. My faults and my perfections are equally known. All I shall premise is, that having been privately informed that Stanza is at work upon the same narrative, I have been forced to hurry the publication. For though I am aware his will no more resemble mine than the lives of the same person by different hands usually do each other, there is a vast advantage in being first at market; and besides, the Horatian rule respecting the time that

manuscripts should lie upon the shelf, will not apply to what is annihilated by keeping; for after lady Selina has been dead six months no one will care about her or her history. Moreover, Stanza threatens me with printing from short hand, but I trust the public will be predisposed to prefer an old friend now sinking in the vale of years, who has almost blinded herself in their service. The work itself certainly must excite attention on account of its originalty; for besides that my readers may expect to meet with some of their own acquaintance among the characters it contains, the history of an old maid, with all the scandal she either circulated or excited during a period of seventy years, must be allowed to be unique. And though I own it is undertaken with a determination of establishing the honour of our sisterhood, I do not despair of occupying a high place among impartial historians,

CHAP. I.

His virtues walk'd their narrow round,
Obscurely wise and coarsely kind.

JOHNSON.

EMILY MANDEVILLE was nineteen years of age when, in the spring of 1778, she exchanged the gloomy solitude of Lime Grove for the magnificent abode of her ancestors, situated in a romantic part of Devonshire. It was at this time the residence of her uncle, Sir Walter Mandeville, the last male heir of an ancient family, in whose person the entail expired. Sir Walter had entered the army in early life, this being one of the common destina-

tions of a younger brother, and had soon become so attached to his profession as to form no wish for such a permanent connection with the fair sex as would detach his thoughts from the duties of a soldier. Possibly the scanty provision of a younger brother, and the circumstance that Sir James was married, and had a family, might tend to preserve him from those violent attacks of wealth and beauty which are so generally irresistible. Certain it is, Colonel Mandeville was suffered to acquire a sort of a misanthropic opinion of the ladies, till, on the death of his nephew, a promising youth of sixteen, he became Sir Walter. He now, for the first time in his life, regretted that his days had been spent in celibacy, since it consigned the name of Mandeville to oblivion, and left himself and a young female orphan the sole inheritors of the blood of that illustri-

ous family. He recollected that his brother, Sir James, on his death bed, had appointed him guardian to both his children; but whilst young Sir George lived, Emily was too insignificant to attract so much of his attention as to induce him to remove her from the care of her maternal aunt, lady Selina Delamore, though he believed that lady to be a most odious character, and was convinced she would quite pervert his niece's disposition.

Sir Walter Mandeville was turned of sixty, when the demise of the young baronet first introduced him to the possession of uncontrouled power, and superfluous wealth, for the disposal of which no human tribunal could call him to account. He had lived neglected and dependent till the heyday of life was passed. The treatment he had endured gave him a dislike for his species, and it was not removed by ob-

serving that, though the poor soldier had been overlooked and despised, the wealthy baronet was courted and flattered. He could not believe himself suddenly transformed from something below mediocrity in talent to a gentleman of most respectable understanding; and though the stories which he had told when ensign, without discomposing one countenance, now excited thunders of applause, he had the discernment to perceive, and the humility to acknowledge, that this tribute was paid to his rank not to himself; and that he certainly was a worse jester now than he had been forty years before. Fortune, therefore, had a very different effect upon his sincere, blunt character, to what she usually exerts, by making him more out of humour with the world, and dissatisfied with himself; and but for his strong attachment to that best part of his spe-

cies, the line of Mandeville, his contempt of sycophants, and his pity of stupid old fellows who are placed in situations where they do nothing but expose themselves, would have induced him to surrender his patrimony to his sovereign, with a request that it might be placed in better hands.

Actuated by family pride, without one iota of what was personal, Sir Walter felt it his duty to keep up the Mandeville dignity. He had public days, and presided at his table, sullen through pique, and awkward from a consciousness of inferiority. He distributed charity with a sort of snarling benevolence, and joined in those rural sports for which he had an aversion, and found inconvenient to his personal infirmities, because the Mandevilles were all very bountiful and kept foxhounds. With a strong, and sometimes acknowledged, regret for those hap-

py days, when, as an old half-pay officer, he could stroll about master of his own actions, or sun himself upon a bench in martial conversation with some other veterans, as Homer describes his Trojan counsellors, he consented to be steward of the assemblies; and with a persuasion that women were a greater plague than any Pandora carried in her box, he sought out partners for the tittering misses, who suppressed their ridicule of the old beau in his presence only from the hope that he would make them an offer. Indeed, Sir Walter's attachment to his family soon made all the prudent matrons in the neighbourhood point him out as a marrying man; and he often pondered in secret on the eligibility of resigning the comforts of singleness for the chanee of giving a legal heir to an ancient and expiring race of worthies. Whoever considers, that though Sir

Walter's temper was in a continual state of irritation, he comprized every earthly blessing in the term bachelor, will truly estimate the nobleness of mind which could induce one of the most inveterate of the Benedict order to meditate such a sacrifice. Certainly, his person did not announce a very eligible votary of hymen. His features, naturally hard, were bronzed by many a campaign in tropical regions; he had lost one eye at the taking of the Havannah; and a musket ball had lodged in his shoulder, which brought on infirmities that compelled him to quit the service. He had too much of the veteran in his character to ascribe to himself imaginary graces, and he never contemplated his figure without lamenting the fallen state of his family.

I have hinted, that his opinion of the fair sex did not tend to expedite the

design of devoting his future days to their society. In common with men who have been more accustomed to coarse and depraved, than to refined and amiable, women, he viewed them as harpies, who spoiled every social comfort, rather than Halcyones brooding over the nest of domestic felicity; and he more especially dressed marriage in those hues when uxorious infirmity was unequally yoked to reluctant levity. He shuddered at the idea of being what he called dandled about by some disguised shrew, or cozening demirep, who submitted to his ill humours for the sake of spending his fortune, of being called Lady Mandeville, and of the reversionary hope of a large jointure. Some few, indeed, of his old companions had bound their grey and scattered locks with hymen's roses, and were become in their own opinions happy husbands; but then Sir Walter

thought very meanly of their understandings, and cordially subscribed to the opinion of those who traced every evil under the sun to female origin. So rigidly did he adhere to this school of metaphysics, that, exclusively of the glorious scars of honour which he deemed ornamental, there was not a defect in his frame, or a misfortune in his life, that he did not derive from women. He traced his asthmatic attacks to his great-grandmother who died of that disease; his mother's family bequeathed him the gout; an aunt humoured him in his indolence till he became an invincible blockhead; his sister-in-law made a mere Jerry of her husband, injured his fortune, and spoiled Mandeville castle by putting in new furniture, and making what she called improvements; and lastly, his nephew lost his life by overheating himself with dancing at Exeter races,

with a girl who wanted to entrap the poor boy for her husband. These reflections were concluded with a lamentation, that though women were jilts the world could not go on without them.

While balancing the miseries of his intended marriage against the supposed duty of contracting such an engagement, he suddenly recollected, that he might sacrifice his peace of mind and freedom without securing the perpetuity of his family: he might have no children, or only daughters. In the latter case, however, it would be possible, as he had great parliamentary influence, to have the name and title restored in the son of one of these unborn heiresses. Sir Walter was not accustomed to make any very bright discoveries, but while pursuing this train of thought, he found it to be somewhat improbable that he should

live to see his grandsons, and a little while after it struck him, that since the estate was now entirely at his own disposal he might as well give it to his brother's daughter as to his own; and as Emily was now marriageable he had a chance of seeing half Mandevilles spring from her stock. Every time he pondered on this scheme it appeared more eligible, and he began to wish to get acquainted with one who was even now his presumptive heiress. If he invited her to come to see him, he could send her away when he found her troublesome, an advantage a wife would not bring with her. Besides, he should not be bound to her for life, for the heiress of the Delamores and Mandevilles would be sure to find a husband enterprizing enough to relieve him from the arduous task of trying to keep a great fortune out of mischief.

But Sir Walter was doomed by fate to be involved in difficulties, especially in his dealings with ladies. Common civility required that he should extend his invitation to the maiden aunt with whom she had resided since the death of both her parents. The sentiments which resolute bachelors entertain toward our sisterhood, resemble the amity of cats and dogs, and I am afraid that the aversion is quite as reciprocal, though every one must allow the provocation is on our side. Sir Walter felt more than the common animosity of a belligerent to Lady Selina. All his little world spoke ill of her. He knew that she had behaved very badly in early life, and she was sister to Lady Honoria Mandeville, for whom he had a violent antipathy, though he had never seen her but once. His reasons for this hatred were, that she governed her husband, shewed some contempt for the family heir-looms, in-

jured the estate, and produced but one son. How was he to endure, even for a few months, the torment of being circumscribed in his own castle by an old maid, who, according to the nature of things, must be whimsical and contradictious. He loved early hours, he detested books, except the Memoirs of Marshal Saxe, and the Campaigns of the Duke of Marlborough; his infirmities required hot rooms, and his chief delight was backgammon. Now, he was pre-assured, Lady Selina would not touch her dinner till he wanted to go to bed, that she required as constant a supply of air as a windmill, walked about with a Greek Lexicon in her hand, and fell into hysterics at the sound of the dice box. There would be one way of escaping her; he could let the castle, take lodgings at Bath, put up a tent bed in a closet for Emily, (if he found the aunt had not spoiled

her) and then apologise to Lady Selina for want of room and ill health, which prevented him from any longer enjoying her company. After various determinations, he at last dispatched the following letter to Lime Grove.

"Dear Niece,

I condole with you very heartily on poor George's death. He was a fine young man, and would have been a credit to the family, which is very poorly represented now. Had he lived, I should not have been so much concerned about you, for managing this estate is quite affliction enough for me, and more than I can well bear, never having been used to business. Besides, I am old and infirm, and that makes me peevish. But if you think a visit to me will be any treat to you, I shall be glad of your company for a few months,

though I have never seen you since you were christened, when I stood god-father. I had promised to do so, expecting you would have been a boy, so I could not well get off.

Give my best respects to Lady Selina Delamore, and thank her for all the trouble she has had with you; I dare say it has been a great deal. I hope she has not permitted you to get any odd ways, or taught you to be disagreeable. I should have been glad to see her ladyship with you, but my old castle is so much out of repair, I have but one comfortable room to live in, and we have no card assemblies in the neighbourhood. Besides, it always disagreed with your mother, who said she caught her death here. Had poor George lived, most likely he would have rebuilt it, but it will do well enough for me, as I am the last of the Mandevilles. So we shall all go to ruin together. I

suppose you will soon pick up a husband, as your fortune is too large for any woman, even if I don't leave you mine; the more is the pity. However, it is our duty to submit, and make the best defence we can, when the campaign goes against us.

I remain

Your affectionate uncle,

WALTER MANDEVILLE."

Among the few comforts which Lady Selina enjoyed, the society of young Emily held a distinguished preeminence. It reconciled her to life, at a time when the world appeared a disgusting void, and the task of informing her niece's mind and modelling her manners, greatly tended to dissipate a melancholy which, as no one could clearly explain its cause, was charitably ascribed to a splenetic dis-

position. But though an old maid, and confessedly an unhappy one, Lady Selina was not so entirely self-devoted as to restrain Emily from accepting her guardian's invitation. On the contrary, she rejoiced that he seemed at length inclined to execute the duties of his office; and though, from having once lived in the world, she well knew that happiness does not always ride about in a vis-a-vis with affluence, she was not displeased to find Sir Walter at least thought it possible that Emily might eventually prove the heiress of the Mandeville, as she already was of the Delamore, family. She had long foreseen her separation from her amiable charge. Lime Grove, although well adapted for the purposes of a nursery and a school, was an improper residence for a young lady of high expectations; and she was endeavouring to subdue her own reluct-

ance to appear again in the world, when the sudden death of Sir George Mandeville opened such vast views to her niece, that she felt bewildered in what manner to act, or how to secure her from those disadvantages which might result from an introduction under her own immediate auspices. While she was thus perplexed as to the mode of proceeding she should adopt, Emily's age convincing her that no more time must be lost, they received Sir Walter's letter. The propriety of restoring the young lady to her father's family, was indisputable. 'Tis true, he only invited her for a short time, and she had heard too much of his singularities, to suppose that the uncle and niece would become so much attached as to deprive her for ever of the society of her adopted daughter; but there were great advantages annexed to this transitory emigration from Lime Grove, as it

would be the means of introducing her to society, to which in every form she was yet a stranger. As to herself, the summer was approaching, the severe infirmities from which she had so long suffered, generally relaxed their fury at that season, when, though she could not be said to enjoy health, pain yielded to the softer term indisposition. Her garden afforded her great amusement, and a few charitable institutions which she had formed in the village, satisfactorily employed her time and thoughts. She fancied she could live without Emily, at least she knew it to be a duty to endeavour to do so: and after giving her letters of introduction to the few ladies whom she knew in the vicinity of Mandeville Castle, the fair Emily was dismissed with many a blessing, and a few ill-concealed tears, on what proved an eventful expedition.

Certainly there appeared nothing very reprehensible in this part of Lady Selina's conduct; but as morose ill-principled people will occasionally act in a creditable manner, and as one part of the moral which I mean to enforce is, the folly and danger of drawing hasty conclusions, I still intreat my readers to suspend their opinions of this mysterious recluse. I have acknowledged that melancholy threw a pensive shade over her character, and does not this circumstance alone, of her being unhappy, intimate that she had been criminal? I leave this question to be discussed by those writers, who, in describing the lot of innocence, seem to consider calamity as no longer one of the trials that virtue is doomed to undergo in this probationary state. Among the oblations which we daily offer to the god Prosperity, we now sacrifice the reputations of the mis-

erable, and we not only say with Young,

> "Look into those we call unfortunate,
> And closer view'd, we find they were unwise,"

—but with Pope's dealer in judgments, we often so far misapply the doctrine of a particular Providence, as to believe "the nodding temple is suspended, to crush the head of Chartres."

When youth is uncontaminated by affectation or duplicity, its feelings are always acute. Emily thought, as the carriage drove from Lime Grove, that she and happiness had bidden adieu till they should be again restored to each other in the society of her dear aunt, in the little cedar parlour. At this moment, she forgot that she had ever felt the sameness of their unvaried days; that she had wished to see a little more of life than their neighbouring market-town afforded, or was supplied by the

rector and apothecary, and two or three quiet country neighbours, to modernize her aunt's antiquated description of her own times. Like other girls of her age, she next wished, that as she was separated from her dear and only friend, the horses had taken the road to London; but her sorrow in leaving Lady Selina, was at last absorbed by painful conjectures respecting the manner in which she should spend her time among strangers, and in a sumptuous style of living to which she was quite unaccustomed. She had gained a few particulars of her guardian's character from her brother; his own letter confirmed the impression of singularity; and Lady Selina's parting precepts, conjuring her to be assiduously attentive, seemed to intimate that the task was difficult. She had hitherto pleased every body, but it was without any studied effort,

and she greatly feared that her powers of fascination were not so inherent as to exempt her from the awkwardness of forced exertion. Again she wished the summer over, and as her aunt had hinted that her introduction to the great world must take place the ensuing winter, her anticipation of the unknown delights of London made her still more indifferent to catch the first glance of the turrets of Mandeville castle.

CHAP. II.

High rising in baronial pride,
Near a swift river deep and wide,
With battlements and turrets crown'd,
The castle in stern grandeur frown'd.
It stood upon a wooded hill
Shelter'd from tempests strong and chill,
Grey were its mossy walls, yet time
Had spar'd the pomp of early prime;
And the arch'd gate and stately tower,
Could still a stern defiance lower,
Had not a mild and peaceful age
Benumb'd the arm of feudal rage.
Yet tho' around the martial keep
Thick clematis and ivy creep,
And where the archers stood in rows,
Profuse th' untrodden wall-flower blows.
This lofty fabric still retains
The homage of the native swains;
And they whose sires were wont to arm,
When its red beacons gave alarm,
Now with pure hearts, contrite and meek,
The solace of its chapel seek.

Or at its owner's friendly call
Joyous frequent the crowded hall:
For duly at each holy time
The bells were rung in solemn chime,
And still the village poor were fed,
The social banquet still was spread.
And as the tale or jest went round,
His honour's health the goblet crown'd
Hoping the line would ne'er run out,
And next year's cyder be as stout.

MANUSCRIPT.

WHEN Emily's carriage had passed the avenue leading to the castle, the decrepid owner, dressed in his Kevenhuller hat and scarlet roquelaure, advanced to the porter's ward to meet his trembling visitor. He first, with somewhat of an alarmed aspect, inquired after Lady Selina's health, and being assured that it was too delicate to permit her to undertake a long journey, he pressed Emily's hand affectionately, told her she was a good girl to come by herself, and led her through

a double line of servants dressed in state liveries, to a spacious, but ill-furnished saloon. Here he presented her to a lady clad in the deepest sables, whom he announced by the name of Lady Mackintosh, of Dunswood, by whose discreet conduct and amiable manners, he wished Emily to form her own behaviour. Though the young lady did not remember this name among the number of those with whom her aunt wished her to be intimate; the presence of a female companion was a wonderful relief to her mind, and she returned her ladyship's embrace with a warmth almost equally affectionate; but she found herself very deficient in volubility when she attempted to express, with the same rapture as Lady Mackintosh had evinced, the ecstasy she felt at this interview, and her conviction that it was the commencement of a permanent friendship.

When dinner was announced, Sir Walter, with a ceremonious bow, led his niece to the head of the table, and desired her to consider herself as mistress of the mansion, while she honoured it with her residence. A transient cloud passed over Lady Mackintosh's face during this address, and on their return to the saloon, she redoubled her efforts to conciliate Emily's esteem. She at first made a slight inquiry after Lady Selina, but finding it answered in a tone of the warmest affection and gratitude, she grew lavish in her praises. "I was but a child," said she, "when I saw her at Mandeville castle. Beauty and grace were blended in her person, and her manners were so very captivating, that I protest I never saw her equal. She had the goodness to shew me her wedding clothes; such taste and magnificence! How often did I wish that I had been Lady Selina Dela-

more! Poor soul, and to think how it all ended! I suppose you know the full particulars?."

Emily protested that she was utterly ignorant of her aunt's early history. "Astonishing!" returned Lady Mackintosh, "but she really is the most singular woman I know, singularly discreet I mean; and, indeed, my dear little Emily, you are very like her. Such prudence at your age is wonderful. But I hope you will repay your uncle's kindness by fixing at Mandeville castle. How I shall exult in acting as chaperon to so much beauty and virtue."

She then proceeded to exculpate herself from what Emily's unsuspicious mind had not discovered to be an impropriety, I mean her own intimacy with Sir Walter. Rivers of tears ran down her cheeks while she described the warm friendship that had subsisted

between Sir Walter and her ever-beloved, her ever-lamented husband. "Sir Jeremiah," said she, in plaintive accents "bequeathed me to the care of his second self, and since that event which I cannot name, Sir Walter Mandeville is the only gentleman whose society I can support. My heart is wedded to the ashes of my lamented partner; and if the sweet attractions of your ingenuous manners should draw me frequently to Mandeville castle, let not your prudence suspect that any sinister design harbours in this sad bosom. But I forget, you know not my history and the noble frankness of your countenance invites my confidence."

The history of Lady Mackintosh would have contained nothing extraordinary, had it not been for the style in which she adorned it. She was born a beauty, with small fortune, attracted more lovers than offers of mar-

riage, and, when the roses of youth had faded, secured herself a small jointure by becoming the fifth wife of Sir Jeremiah Mackintosh, and mother-in-law to four sets of children. To the happiness of this connection, her flowing crape and streaming tears now bore witness; and she protested her frequent visits to Mandeville castle had no other motive than to converse about the dear man with one who knew all his virtues, or to implore the counsel and protection of Sir Walter for a poor woman who had now lost her only friend.

Though Emily had seen nothing of the world, all the ingenuousness of innocence could not prevent her from perceiving that her uncle's attentions were peculiarly grateful to this lady, and that, on his side, they much exceeded the strained politeness which the habits of military gallantry usually

extorted from this professed woman-hater. In truth, Sir Walter had hitherto considered the fair widow as the only excepton to female craft and female folly, which the experience of sixty years, and a residence in many different countries, had supplied; and when he pondered on the dire necessity of contracting a matrimonial alliance, he sometimes regretted that Lady Mackintosh was too inconsolable to allow him a hope of success, and too old to produce him a son. Indeed, he could scarcely think it right to attempt the subversion of the virtue he revered, for his admiration of her was founded on the deep affliction with which the loss of her husband appeared to overwhelm her. This regret he considered the more generous, from having been often called upon to arbitrate between them, when their disputes exceeded that sort of quiet bickering and well-bred sar-

casm, which is thought very wholesome in the marriage state. Here, however, the case was different to what he found it in other families, the lady was always right; and after proving herself to be so, by her submission to the domination of an obstinate wayward husband, she made even Sir Walter regret, that the only woman who knew how to govern a family was pushed into the back ground by a surly Petruchio much below her in talents. I do not mean to refer this whimsical decision to the god of love. When Cupid is fast asleep Caprice often steals his arrows, and exercises pertinacious veterans, and designing adventurers, in a ridiculous game of archery. If the reader will not believe that a desire of talking of dead Sir Jeremiah, or a love for the living Emily, occasioned Lady Mackintosh to be a constant guest at the castle of Sir Walter, they must

try to account for her conduct from the circumstance of her having a small jointure and a great soul. Like many other ladies, she discovered that she was fit to move in an exalted sphere, and knowing she was capable of spening eight thousand a year, who could condemn her for wishing to obtain the means? Scheming ladies, like skilful generals, are anxious to carry on their operations remote from the observation of the hostile party. Lady Mackintosh had opposed the introduction of Miss Mandeville to the castle, with a steadiness that almost shook Sir Walter's opinion of her extreme pliability, but no sooner was the young lady arrived than, with the most graceful versatility, she veered into a positive conviction of the propriety of her residing with her uncle, and was all gratitude and transport at the acquisition of such a companion. One reason for this alter-

ation was her perceiving, that suspicion was not a predominant feature in the character of her young friend; who was so little inclined to draw uncandid conclusions that the blooming widow often carried on her lines of circumvallation in the presence of the expectant niece, without stimulating her to undertake the relief of the beleagured fort. Indeed, Emily had all that sovereign contempt of wealth, and that abhorrence of mercenary motives, which exist in those who have never found their enjoyments circumscribed by the want of means to procure them. She was the inheritrix of all her grandfather Lord Montolieu's fortune, except a small annuity settled upon her aunt Selina; yet, with that perfect ignorance of the value of money, and disregard of self, which, when annexed to a good heart and a sound judgment, often ripen into true liberality, she never troubled

herself to inquire how many thousands were inscribed upon her rent-roll. She was only anxious to be of age, that she might make a splendid addition to the scanty income of her dearest friend. She however once ranked the possibility of being Sir Walter's heiress among the agreeable contingencies of her future life, nor, while she felt the inconveniences attached to the immense damp rooms and stone galleries in the castle, did she lay any plan for its future improvement. Had she even been assured that all the widows and spinsters in the kingdom were assembled in full council, to debate on the expediency of attacking this same redoubtable fortress, and had actually named formidable generals to head the design, such was her opinion of the impracticability and folly of the attempt that she would have remained quiet; careless of the event, except as it might

affect the happiness of her guardian.

But though Miss Mandeville was thus, may I not say nobly, indifferent to the artifices of others, and incapable of practising any herself, there was an engaging frankness and gentle tenderness in her manners and temper which soon insinuated into Sir Walter's good graces, maugre all the resistance which spleen and prejudice, or even the more dangerous commendations of Lady Mackintosh, could oppose. Emily sincerely valued her uncle's good qualities, and she pitied with equal sincerity the disadvantages and infirmities which fostered his caprices. Thus an internal feeling governing her expressions and looks, the former were always affectionate and the latter attentive. True, she never reached the hyperbolical praise which Lady Mackintosh liberally bestowed:

but if she never was officiously solicitous, she never was negligent; and so powerful is the charm of calm, uniform, patient tenderness, to those who have never experienced any thing but the cold servility of mercenary attendance, or the wily cant of flattery, that Sir Walter very soon laid all his matrimonial schemes aside, and declared his gentle niece the heiress of his fortunes. In a few months, he found her accommodating temper, and anticipating attentions, so necessary to his infirm frame, that instead of being anxious to rid himself of so troublesome a charge as he had imagined a girl in the bloom of youth must prove to a worn out soldier, totally ignorant of female wiles, his wish was to die in her arms. And he determined, that residence in Mandeville Castle should be the first condition he would require of the man whom he entrusted with so

great a treasure as he unexpectedly discovered his dear little niece really was. Tis true, he still thought female mischievousness should not only be circumscribed within the pale of wedlock, but be absolutely submitted to the rule of man. But general rules bend to particular occasions, and with such bright examples as Emily and Lady Mackintosh to enlighten his understanding, it is no wonder that he wished his niece's future consort would sometimes allow her to have her own way, as in that case he was sure she would be good to him.

Thus, without any extraordinary endowments of nature, or any borrowed aids from art, the simplicity and affectionate sweetness of Miss Mandeville restored her uncle to his natural self, and from a peevish misanthrope, whose very benevolence and mean opinion of himself made him unhap-

py, and prepossessed him with the idea that he was a useless blank in the creation, the jest of wise men and the prey of knaves, the single circumstance of his having excited an interest in one grateful heart reconciled him to himself and the world. "I only did my duty," said he, "in sending for my brother's orphan girl, and see what a blessing she is to me. My fortune was her's by right, and she is as thankful to me for saying she shall have it as if she were a charity girl. No, no, Emily is no cheat; in my last fit of the asthma, when they thought me insensible and dying, I heard all that passed. Lady Mackintosh asked if I had made a will, and to be sure that was very considerate and good in her ladyship; but I never shall forget how Emily sobbed over me, and said her dear, dear uncle was gone for ever."

The few months for which Emily

was invited to Castle Mandeville were passed, and Lady Selina began to remind her niece that she ought not to press upon her uncle's hospitality. But Sir Walter's reluctance to part with his young companion had increased to such a height, that he privately sent that lady word that he would not give up his fair ward. When he had the gout no one placed his footstool in so happy a position, or roasted the orange for his night potion with such adroitness. Her simple plaintive songs often charmed away both pain and peevishness, and he discovered that since she had presided at his table the conversation improved, and the guests seemed happier, though he displayed less state, and they drank less wine. In some few instances, he had not his own way so much as before Emily's arrival, but he almost thought the alterations she had imperceptibly introduced were im-

provements, and so happy did he find himself with his lovely niece in the reciprocal exercise of acquiescence and indulgence, that he began to suspect nature had really designed him for the fond husband and the tender father, and that his apparent moroseness was but the accidental incrustation of a benevolent heart, petrified at not having its own susceptibility met with equal warmth and frankness. But while he solaced himself with the thought, that without doing any ridiculous action in his old age, or compromising his liberty or his reputation, he had secured the society and affection of a sweet young woman, he never allowed himself to think of the deprivation Lady Selina must endure, who had reared the rose he now cherished on his bosom, and was compelled to surrender it when it became most valuable. His aversion to this lady still

continued, and he considered Emily's virtues and graces as inherent qualities derived from the Mandeville blood, which her bad example could not annihilate. He only allowed this affectionate aunt the negative praise of having made Emily's temper so sweet and compliant by the early trials to which she subjected it. Gratitude to her uncle for his affection and liberality induced Emily, with some reluctance, to inform her aunt, that she could not resist his wish to stay with him a little longer, that she really felt contented, and should be quite happy if she could hear her dear maternal guardian had found some substitute for her society during the long dull evenings which were now approaching. If she could spend this one winter without her, she hoped in spring to find a little cottage near them, and that her aunt would permit herself to

be removed from her cold gloomy habitation to the warm air and pleasant society of Devonshire. She also pledged her own reputation for veracity, that (whatever odd tales they had mutually heard of each other) she and Sir Walter would be the best of friends in a fortnight after they should become personally acquainted.

Anxious to acquit my sisterhood of the charge of selfishness, so strongly urged against them by bashaw Benedicts, I must observe, that Lady Selina in her answer spoke largely of her own comforts and improved health. She rejoiced in the partiality of Sir Walter for Emily, and in her own satisfaction in his protection; and reminded her that she was now residing with her natural guardian, to whom her father had transferred his claim of duty. Without absolutely rejecting the plan of her own removal, she spoke

of it as problematical, and concluded with saying, that instead of regarding him with prejudice, she felt warm admiration for Sir Walter.

This business being adjusted, the winter amusements of Mandeville Castle commenced, and as the state of the roads, and the migrations of the inhabitants to London, allowed a less frequent routine of visits, back-gammon and reading took a larger share. The latter (except when Sir Walter was absent) was entirely limited to military studies; and as every recorded siege or battle brought to the baronet's mind some similar incident in his own campaigns, and engaged him in a long detail of the corresponding circumstances under which he had seen fields lost or won, Emily perceived that there was little prospect of finishing the thick folio which contained the triumphs of the great Duke of Marlborough, and lamented her want of relish for what

was likely to prove a lasting entertainment. She had made herself complete mistress of back-gammon, but Lady Mackintosh was infinitely the better commander, and could talk about ravelins, bastions, and counterscarps, and the method of drawing an enemy into an enfilade, marshalling an army, storming a fort, and covering a retreat, with a precision which increased Sir Walter's admiration of her vast abilities. To say the truth, Lady Mackintosh was inclined to exercise her generalship upon poor Emily, who feeling a desire not to appear ignorant of what her uncle thought essential knowledge, sometimes attempted to quote Marshal Saxe, or to describe the battles of Cæsar and Xenophon, but she knew so little about drawing up her forces that she fell into the first ambuscade her antagonist prepared for her, and lost the battle

at the instant she was describing how it was won. The good natured Sir Walter, often endeavoured to check her ladyship's laugh of triumph, with a "Pho, pho, well the child was mistaken;" but her unaptness to comprehend a science in which he condescended to be her instructor, would soon have lowered his opinion of his young pupil's understanding, had it not been for one circumstance which is of importance to my narrative.

I have premised, that these military studies were illustrated by anecdotes, chiefly drawn from Sir Walter's own observation; and as in talking over the fields he had fought, the recollection of a strong attachment he then formed forcibly rushed upon his mind, and gave energy to his language, he soon fixed his niece's attention, which, ever wandering from Churchill's antedated wars, turned with so ardent a gaze on

his countenace while he recited the engagements he had witnessed on the banks of the Elbe, and Scheldt, that she would next day give a clear account of the whole transactions. It never occurred to him that, in those martial representations, he generally introduced one portrait, Sydney earl of Avondel, whose then youthful arm rescued him at the battle of Minden from the sword of a Bavarian officer. He was under, lying his feet unhorsed and wounded, in the momentary expectation of the exterminating blow, when the gallant Avondel, who acted as a volunteer in his company, rushed upon the enemy, and preserved the life of his officer at the imminent peril of his own.

Nor was this the only action in which the young earl had evinced his prowess and magnanimity. At least the gratitude and affection of Sir Wal-

ter transformed him into a hero equal to that of an heroic poem, who performs every important action in his own proper person. Was a redoubt carried with peculiar circumstances of gallantry, Lord Avondel commanded the detachment. Were the intended measures of the enemy so clearly pointed out to the general that he was able to post his advanced guard so as to counteract their designs; this only happened when Lord Avondel went on the reconnoitering party. He also uniformly took the standards, and led the pursuit. The most distinguished prisoners that were taken had submitted to him, and his urbanity to the vanquished was always equal to his skill in gaining the victory. Even when misfortune clouded the lustre of the British arms, the name of Avondel continued to shine pure and resplendent, for Sir Walter described him

as diminishing the horrors of a retreat, parting with every personal convenience to relieve the anguish of his sick and wounded soldiers, comforting the indigent widow, and protecting the destitute orphan. To these encomiums the baronet added the praise of every gentlemanlike accomplishment and civic virtue. "I always was a blockhead," he would say; "my aunt Dorothy never suffered me to be whipt when I was an idle lubber and tore my Accidence. Take me out of a camp and I know nothing, but Avondel is learned enough to be archbishop of Canterbury. He had too much sense to be a courtier, or no finical fop among them could match him for fine breeding. He has shone in the House of Lords, and when he was sent as ambassador to any court he always did his errand. He had no business to turn soldier to hack and hew his way to a

scanty maintenance, for he was the only son of a noble family, and I still hope, after all he has suffered these twenty years, he will, if he lives to come back to England, marry some worthy woman, and bring up heroes like himself." Miss Mandeville once asked her uncle to explain what sufferings Lord Avondel had undergone, but after expressing some surprise that she had never heard of his base usage, declared himself unable to tell the particulars, but added that it was a very infamous affair.

An incident happened at Lime Grove the day before Miss Mandeville left it which strongly impressed her youthful imagination. Anxious to present her niece with some token of remembrance before they separated, Lady Selina unlocked her casket of jewels, which were remarkably magnificent, in her presence, and the young

lady's eye was instantly attracted by the portrait of a gentleman richly set with diamonds. The features beamed with the noble expression of dignity and beauty, and the costly enchasing intimated that it was the gift of peculiar attachment. Turning her eyes on her aunt, Emily discovered that the faint tinge of carmine which ill health had left in her countenance was faded to the most deathlike paleness, while her lip quivered with concealed emotion. The only answer which she could articulate to her niece's question, as to the name of the gentleman, was, "that he was the first and best of men." "Is he dead," inquired Miss Mandeville. "Perhaps he is," was Lady Selina's reply, while, with a trembling hand and averted eyes, as if she feared to indulge herself with a look, she restored the picture to its envelope, and adding, that he had been

long absent from England, locked the casket and left the room. At their next meeting, Emily perceived her aunt's eyes were inflamed with weeping, and she resolved never more to revive the painful subject.

It so happened that Sir Walter Mandeville, in one of his warm eulogium's on Lord Avondel, used the same exclamation of admiration that had burst from Lady Selina on Emily's discovering the mysterious picture, and with all that warmth of imagination which teaches young people to believe that to be true which is only possible, and also, that the object which occupies their own thoughts is the only one in the world worth contemplating, the amiable girl persuaded herself, that this most distinguished of human beings, the celebrated Lord Avondel, was equally esteemed and loved by her two nearest relations, and was some-

how connected with the melancholy of her dearest aunt. His eminent successes in the East Indies had long filled the pages of the Gazette, and cheered the drooping spirits of the nation, depressed by the adverse and afflicting circumstances which attended the American war. One circumstance militated against the conclusion she had formed, the portrait was not dressed as an officer; and surely a hero of such eminence would choose to have his likeness aken in the costume which he wore so honourably to himself and advantageously to his country? If her uncle would but tell her all he knew respecting the early history of his friend, the point of identity might soon be determined.

Her utmost address, however, could discover no more than that Lord Avondel embarked in the pursuit of military fame in consequence of a severe

disappointment, and most scandalous usage from a woman to whom he was much attached. His debut in arms was marked with circumstances of peculiar splendour, and he rose rapidly to the highest honours. After the peace of Aix la Chapelle, he was entrusted with a special commission to a foreign state, and concluded a treaty highly beneficial to his country. He resided many years in Florence as ambassador at the court of the Grand Duke, and from thence went to one of our principal Indian settlements in the capacity of governor, where his skill and courage in war, his justice and wisdom in the civil departments, and his universal benignity and amiable manners, conciliated the natives, appalled the enemy, and raised the glory of his country to such a height as consoled her well-wishers, and silenced the murmurs of faction, ever prone to sink

heroic actions, while it loves to dwell on the misdeeds of those who scandalize the British name by injustice and treachery. All this corresponded with Lady Selina's confession, that he had been long absent; but who could the lady be to whose baseness England might be said to owe her hero? Certainly it was not her beloved aunt; she was all honour and fidelity. It was impossible for her to behave scandalously to any one, and as she admitted Lord Avondel's excellence it was evident there could be no mistake on this occasion.

Probably then (for when complete information was denied, Emily could only reason upon probabilities) Lady Selina was the chosen friend of Lord Avondel, and as such treasured his memory, and lamented his wrongs, though her own resignation of the world proceeded from some other

cause. True, it was singular, that among the many anecdotes of distinguished people with which she enlivened their evening tete-a-tetes she had never told her the history of this injured worthy; especially as it was of such publicity that her uncle seemed to wonder she had never heard it. Doubtless her dear aunt had excellent reasons for her silence, yet, whatever they were, Emily felt all knowledge was vain and unattractive compared to the narrative of the wrongs which "this first and best of men" had suffered from a woman.

CHAP. III.

"'Tis not the dress or mien my soul adores,
"But the rich beauties of a British mind."

SHENSTONE.

THOUGH Miss Mandeville had by this time discovered, that, either owing to forgetfulness, or, as some would say, too great poetical powers, (for a certain coarse word must never be applied to the communications of a lady) the narratives of Lady Mackintosh were not strictly correct, not always so much alike as to enable one to discover she was talking of the same people whose adventures she had painted a week before in different col-

ours, she could not help applying to her as an historian would to old Geoffrey Monmouth when every other author was silent. But here her ladyship also was dumb, though she pleaded ignorance in such a manner as convinced Emily "she could a tale unfold." Her ladyship was one of those wonder-makers who are so often met with in society, and who seem to consider conversation, "not as the feast of reason or the flow of soul," but as the celebration of an ancient game, where every one contends who shall shoot his arrows and hurl his quoits farthest. Like the giants of old, they consider truth as a Jupiter, and pile Pelion on Ossa and Ossa on Olympus till they erect a pile to defy its omnipotence. If, to avoid sinking into total insignificance in such company, you venture to sport what you think a Patagonian bouncer, they instantly create a full

grown Brobdignag monster to oppose it, and your pigmy marvel at last looks only like Gulliver on the lap of Glumdalclitch. With the propensity to deal in prodigies, and with such an untold mystery to relate, as the story of a man of sense and courage seriously affected by love, what influence more potent than the rod of Hermes could chain the voluble tongue of Lady Mackintosh?

They know little of the disposition of youth who suppose its imagination is circumscribed by meeting with difficulty and opposition. Sir Walter had begun to expatiate in praise of his friend during the first week of his niece's residence with him, but it was not till the inundation of company had subsided, and Emily discovered that there was something in the story which she could not know, that she gave up her whole thoughts to muse

on Lord Avondel. The interest she took in his glory was highly grateful to her guardian, who, by applying to her, received correct intelligence when the overland dispatches were expected. It had lately been whispered, that in consequence of a change in administration, letters of recall had been sent to India, and Sir Walter consoled the feelings of the patriot by indulging those of the friend. "He will certainly visit me," said the veteran, "if he lives to come home, and these old walls shall ring with joy when he enters my gate. I'll have an ox roasted, and we will tap the pipes of cyder saved for poor George's coming of age. All the country shall be called in, and we will go out to meet him with such a cavalcade as has never been seen since my grandfather met and feasted the king's army after it had beaten the Duke of Monmouth at Sedgemoor. Girl, you

shall see such bonfires, and hear such rejoicings! That's the way we old soldier's welcome our brave comrades. We shall talk over our campaigns, but pray don't you put in with foolish speeches, for I can tell you my lord has an utter aversion to ignorant people."

Roasting an ox, broaching pipes of cyder, calling in the tenants, and talking over campaigns, do not sound like amusements which a girl would prefer to Ranelagh and the Opera: but Emily's education had given her somewhat of a romantic turn, and it is certain the chance of seeing Lord Avondel was one unacknowledged motive for her continuing so perfectly satisfied with her present residence. The probability of that desired pleasure was regularly discussed in the family party after the arrival of the newspapers, but these faithful registers, or rather let me

say predictors, of events, never suffered hope and fear to hang long in equipoize. One day Miss Mandeville read with exulting hope, "The cabinet council sat yesterday till a very late hour. The subject in deliberation is kept a profound secret, yet we have learnt from high authority that the Earl of Avondel is recalled, in consequence of an arrangement which the premier has made with Lord Lurcher Rackrent. A frigate is prepared to take his lordship to the settlement, and the ministerial influence in the lower house will be strengthened by the addition of six boroughs. The displaced nobleman is to have the vacant blue ribband to bind up the wounds of honour."

The next day's post brought the following intelligence.

"We hear the arrangements respecting Lord Avondel's removal from his

viceroyalty are suspended in consequence of strong representations having been sent over by the principal inhabitants, intreating the continuance of a nobleman whose conduct has reflected the highest honour on his country and himself, and increased the resources of that important colony to an incredible degree. We must enter our protest against bartering the safety of the empire for ministerial preponderance, and the infamous system of close boroughs. If the events of the Savoir vivre are unpropitious, Lord Lurcher has still some unfelled woods, and timber sells well."

The next week's intelligence took a shorter form, "Lord Avondel's recall has been long determined upon. A magnificent house has been taken for his lordship in Grosvenor square, which is preparing for his immediate reception."

In a few more posts appeared an alarming article: "Great fears are entertained for the safety of the St. George East Indiaman, on board of which the Earl of Avondel and suite are known to have taken their passage for England."

The terrors of the Mandevilles only lasted till the next day, when fear subsided into disappointment on reading, "We are anxious to relieve the apprehensions of those whose friends or relations embarked on board the St. George, by announcing the safe arrival of that ship in the Downs, after an expeditious and prosperous voyage. She brings no intelligence of Lord Avondel."

It was on the 11th of January, 1779, that Miss Mandeville read with indescribable rapture the following imposing paragraph:

"Yesterday, at a late hour, Sydney

Earl of Avondel arrived at the Hummums, after an absence of twenty years from his native country. A vast concourse of people assembled to testify their admiration of his eminent services, and to gratify their curiosity by gazing on so distinguished a personage. But with that elevated modesty which always accompanies superior merit, his lordship eluded observation, and after gracefully bowing to the populace, who greeted him with three cheers, he retired to an inner apartment. The hotel was watched till a late hour, but his lordship was not visible, and it is suspected he is gone into the country to avoid those distinctions which his deserved popularity must acquire in an age so destitute of really great men. We were fortunately near the carriage when his lordship alighted, and are happy to report that the fatigues and

dangers he has undergone have not injured his personal appearance. His fine figure and elegant deportment enabled us to recognize him at the first glance. Without meaning to reflect upon our contemporaries we must do ourselves the justice to say, that disregarding all floating surmises and vague reports we have given the earliest and most correct information concerning the course which ministers intended to pursue with this celebrated nobleman."

As Emily was hastening to announce, that at last the truth was known, she met her uncle, whose countenance was illuminated with a flush of extraordinary joy which he had great difficulty in restraining, while Emily read the above paragraph. Before she had concluded, he snatched the paper out of her hand, and with a hearty curse on the lying dog of a printer who flew

from India to England backwards and forwards faster than a cannon ball, vowed such trumpery should never enter his doors again. He then gave his niece a letter with this exclamation, "See girl, this from himself, 'tis the very writing of the real Avondel."

"Falmouth, January
9th, 1779.

"Dear Mandeville,

"The inquiries of an alienated exile on revisiting his native country, generally suggest the most painful sensations. The wandering life I have long led has of late years prevented me from forming strong attachments, and I now find most of my early friends either dead, or changed in situation and character in a degree that must prevent me from renewing those dear connections the image of which has often solaced my wounded mind.

Amid the melancholy or disgraceful details which I have heard since my arrival of those I once loved, it has given me infinite satisfaction to find that my brave friend and companion in arms, Colonel Mandeville, now sees his well-earned laurels flourish in the venerable mansion of his ancestors, and still retains all his native warmth of heart, his unpretending integrity and benevolence. Convinced it is your first wish to make others happy, I congratulate you on possessing the power.

"You are the same Mandeville as when first you won my confidence and esteem, but I am only the wreck of Avondel. I landed at this place ten days ago, with a determined resolution to devote the remainder of my eventful life to privacy and reflection. I have seen enough of public measures and public men to confirm the sen-

tence, that vanity and vexation ever attend high desires. Shall I accuse the species, of which I form a part, of universal ingratitude and treachery, or shall I say that some malignant fatality has ever haunted my steps, and taught me to seek for my reward in the feelings of conscious rectitude, rather than in the attainment of those objects on which I had fixed my ardent wishes?

"Do not, Mandeville, call this frank avowal of my present sentiments, a muffled drum sounding a dead march over defunct ambition. The greatest favour administration could confer upon me was my recall. I love retirement, my health requires serious attention to recover the injuries it has suffered from unwholesome climates. I have been overwhelmed with ceremony, deafened with adulation; henceforth I shall live to myself. I trust I

shall be excused from personal attendance in London. My secretary can tell all I have done, if the state in which I have left the settlement I governed requires any comment. He also can develope my future plans, should my successor deign to inquire what they were. The formality of a court life is insupportable, and I scorn to accept any reward. You, honest, noble-minded Walter, will not blame me if I own, that though my patrimonial estate was very inadequate to my rank, I close my active career in the same honourable poverty in which it was commenced. I have not despoiled the golden musnuds of India, the mines of Golconda have not soiled my hands, nor will I now barter the riches of an independent soul for wealth purchased by unprincipled submission to the transient pageants of power, or by a similar opposition to the measures of those

who direct the helm of state. That steady integrity which has hitherto directed my course, shall ever be my leading star. I have enough for honourable privacy, for philosophical ease, for circumspect benevolence. An unconnected man must be avaricious if he desires more.

"I find, Mandeville, you still continue one of that free and happy fraternity, who, being accountable to no tribunal but the laws of their country and the rebukes of conscience, laugh at the long stories of hopes and fears, promises and rebukes, doubts and disappointments, which compel married men to be fortune-hunters and levee-hunters, blind idolators of insolent importance, or dumb slaves to female caprice, vanity, and folly. The subject animates me, for it recalls to my mind the evening previous to the glorious day of Minden, when we mounted

guard together, and when you relieved the anxious tediousness of that night by a lively eulogium on the superior advantages of our destiny compared with those who felt the immortal longings of the hero repressed by apprehensive terrors for indigent widows and destitute orphans. If, while preparing our minds for a speedy termination of our mortal career in the field of honour, we felt it as an alleviation of our lot to consider, that we had no near connections to suffer for us, should we turn cowards now and shrink from the idea of a life passed in solitude, without one being to stimulate our exertions, excite our hopes, or mitigate our woes? Have we devoted our youth, strength, health, and talents, to become insulated creatures, of whom fame talks largely, but affection is silent? If there was error in the choice, repentance comes too late.

We will preserve ourselves from ridicule by never believing that we can excite affection, and if we are not happy we will assume the decency of content.

"I know not, Mandeville, whether the vacant life of a country gentleman have made you as much a philosopher, as confinement on ship board, and six months of inaction, have made me a misanthrope, or whether you still continue the cheerful blunt fellow you were when I visited you in the hospital at Ravensburg? Without allowing me to mention your own sufferings, you then only asked me the fate of your comrades, and the movements of the enemy after that successful effort of British courage. If time has done much to chill the noble ardour of your heart, fortune has been equally busy in deepening the susceptibilities of mine. I shall winter at

Bath, having been advised to try the effect of those salutary waters. I trust you will soon join me there. We shall meet as fellow soldiers used to hard conflicts, and still called to contend, not with the enemies of our country, but those domestic tyrants that invade the little kingdom of man; I mean those proud regrets and keen sensibilities which tell us we deserved a happier lot. Farewell much respected Mandeville.

"Believe me,

"faithfully your's,

"AVONDEL."

There are young ladies, pretenders, too, to precision, enthusiasm, and tenderness, who would have found all their admiration of a returning hero subside on perusing such an indubitable testimony of his being poor, neglected,

ill, and unhappy. But Miss Mandeville was not one of those who require the nodding plumes and velvet train of prosperity to designate merit. Her compassionate tears fell over those bursts of wounded feeling which reluctantly spoke a dejected heart. And grasping Sir Walter's hand, she exclaimed, "dear uncle, what can be done to reconcile Lord Avondel to the world?"

"Ah," exclaimed the sympathizing veteran, drawing his hand over his moistened eyes, "you cannot make the world good enough to satisfy such a mind as his. I wish you had seen him, Emily, when he rode up to Lord G anby's quarters, and asked leave to use his sword in the allied army. He was the finest looking gentleman I ever beheld; but there was much of deep thought and melancholy in his countenance. He supped with Prince

Ferdinand that night; we had him afterwards at our mess. Sometimes he would sit quite silent, and then burst out in such a manner! No man ever had so much wit, and when he has kept the table on a roar for several hours, I have whispered him, 'Avondel, my dear boy, I think you must have felt happy this evening.' 'No, Captain Mandeville,' he would say, 'gaiety is a loose domino, and I play the fool in it, but misery is my every day garb, and I cannot throw it off.'"

Emily sobbed with pity, and at last observed, that as she had heard her nucle praise the unbounded benevolence of his friend, surely his own melancholy must have been relieved by dispensing comfort to the afflicted.

"I have seen him," said Sir Walter, "start from the straw on which he has lain, supporting an expiring soldier, and heard him declare he envied the brave

fellow. 'Death,' said he, 'in its most dismal shape, is not so terrible as a life of disappointment.'"

"Surely," replied Emily, "he has never yet met with any one who has felt sufficient veneration of his exalted character to attempt the removal of the thorn which thus corrodes his peace. I cannot form so inconsistent an opinion of the possessor of such superior talents, such refined sensibility, such active generosity, as all ascribe to Lord Avondel, as to suppose that he would continue brooding over his secret disgusts if he had at hand some one whose tenderness, sympathy, and solicitude would shew him his own value, and, by grieving at his dejection, stimulate him to forget past wrongs and look forward to future hopes. How I wish he had early married such a woman as my aunt

Selina. She would certainly have made him as happy as he is illustrious."

"True," said Sir Walter, "he would not then have envied the dying soldier."

"My love," whispered Lady Mackintosh, "you don't know every particular of your aunt's character."

A profound silence ensued, which was broken by Sir Walter's declaring that Avondel should not die of a broken heart at Bath. "I'll go myself," added he, "and fetch him to the castle. The doctors say the spring in Marlton-moor is quite as good as that at the pump-room. We will all turn nurses, and, Emily, you shall try to make him forget—Pshaw, I know not what I am talking of. Only never mention that perverse fantastical aunt of your's to any of us. I never heard a soul but yourself speak well of her."

A deep suffusion flushed Emily's

cheeks, but the fierce look of her uncle was too intimidating to allow her to vindicate the character she most esteemed. She now felt convinced, that there had been some violent discord between her two nearest surviving relations, which, though her placid aunt had entirely renounced it, still rankled in the more obdurate heart of her uncle, and was too tenaciously supported by old prejudice to yield to any thing but actual observation. She knew if he would but become acquainted with Lady Selina he must either confess, that he was mistaken in her character, or that she had undergone a complete change since he first believed her to be perverse or fantastical.

Lady Mackintosh now busied herself in endeavouring to prevent Sir Walter's intended invitation. This lady was one of those rare characters who, upon being admitted to an intimacy with

a family, never rest till by insinuation, contrivance, pretty starts of caprice, whispers, and other instances of adroit management, they obtain its whole direction; and reduce the ostensible agents to mere puppets, twisted into the desired attitude by the management of secret strings. Now, though Sir Walter Mandeville believed himself to be made of the same immoveable stuff as Atlas, 'tis certain he seldom ordered a dinner, or asked a party, but in exact conformity to the taste and pleasure of his expert governess, in whose hands he was little more than a living automaton. On two points, however, he preserved his original tenacity. One was his attachment to Emily, and the other his resolution to console his old friend. In vain did her ladyship hint the strange conclusions which the world would form from his bringing a soldier of broken fortunes

to his house, while it was the residence of his declared heiress. In vain did she enlarge on the respect due to received opinions, in vain urge that tenderness to the unhappy should never teach us to forget prudence to ourselves, or, as a last resource, intimate that chariness for her own character would necessitate her to be a less frequent visitor at the castle, while Lord Avondel was there, who, for aught she knew, might be quite a man of gallantry. Sir Walter stood firm, or rather continued faithful, to the first impulse which he had received from his supreme directress: for sorry am I to observe, that her ladyship's opinions were apt to vary. Since the perusal of Lord Avondel's letter she had conceived an incurable prejudice against the conqueror of the Mahrattas, whose return she once proposed to celebrate with a fête cham-

petre. She ever held the plain robe of honourable poverty unbecoming, and she thought the man poor indeed in mind as well as in purse, who could neither find gold nor diamonds in India, nor take the rational way of procuring places and pensions in England. And she supposed the best thing a person so unfit for society could do, would be to die at Bath of the melancholy regret which he ought to feel at having lost such fine opportunities.

Finding Sir Walter's hospitable intentions were not to be shaken, her ladyship's anxiety for her dear Emily induced her to conquer her abhorrence of red-coats, which had almost led her to behave like Gay's country maiden in his moral to the fable of the tame stag. She told Sir Walter, that if he would introduce so dangerous an acquaintance to his niece, the only way of protecting her reputation from the

sarcasms of the censorious, would be to have some discreet lady who knew the world, and was not very young always with her. Every quality she described suited herself so exactly, that Sir Walter instantly guessed her meaning, and expressing his hope tha she would have the goodness to undertake the office. Lady Mackintosh paused a moment, recollected the four families of which her dear Sir Jeremiah had made her step-dame, and at last considering that their feuds were too inveterate, and their dispositions too untractable for her to controul with success, she determined to leave them to peck at each other like a brood of game chickens, and to forsake Dunswood, that scene of all her former happiness, ad even the mausoleum of Sir Jeremiah, where she had just planted clematis and eglantine. Every thing was thus happily adjusted. Sir Walter set

off to fetch Lord Avondel, and Lady Mackintosh was established at Mandeville Castle in the capacity of chancellor of the court of decorum.

Sir Walter was absent but a few days. He returned to announce that he had with much difficulty prevailed on his friend to accept the invitation. Emily now began to doubt the rectitude and delicacy of those sentiments which had induced her to take so warm an interest in the fate of a stranger. She had no respect for Lady Mackintosh, yet, if she could judge of the world by report, it contained many people of her stamp, who would, like her, discover sinister views in the most disinterested designs, and subject that conduct which resulted from pure admiration and generous pity to such opprobrium as would stamp indelible disgrace on her character. Was it indeed necessary that she should have a per-

petual companion to act as the guardian of her fame? Good Heaven! what could have made her affect or avow sympathy, solicitude, and tenderness, for a hero?

She now reconsidered every point of view in which Sir Walter had placed his friend's character. Was he not more terrifying than amiable? keenly susceptible of injuries, fully conscious of desert, penetrating and inflexible, gloomy from indulged habit, and gay by an occasional self-derogating constraint, avowedly prejudiced against the fair sex, yet treating them with that condescending politeness which indicated his respect for his own reputation? Such errors or misfortunes, call them by which name you please, must render the great, the glorious Avondel a less desirable companion than those inferior people who are

destitute of his talents and virtues, but more regardful of the just claims of others.

Yet still he was great and glorious. Curiosity is a potent motive; and admitting that the phœnix was a phenomenon, there was a vast pleasure in looking at what all the world was talking of. She only wished she could see him and hear him talk, without being ex[illegible]d to his penetrating, and too pro[illegible]y uncandid, observation. She regretted the embarrassing mystery which seemed to subsist about her aunt, as it prevented her from mentioning their expected visitor in her letters, or asking for the benefit of Lady Selina's prudent counsels. It was not from any doubt of the rectitude and honour which she had so long experienced that Emily practised this forbearance, but it was a recollection of the distress which the dis-

covery of the picture had excited, that determined her to avoid awakening similar emotions. Time would discover whether there was any affinity between the sorrows of these elevated characters, and she resolved to behave with the most guarded caution, not only to the earl, but also to her fair guardian, of whose friendship and prudence she entertained a very low opinion.

CHAP. IV.

Prospero.—Were he not something stain'd
With grief (that beauty's canker) thou might'st call him
A goodly person.

Miranda.—I might call him
[illegible]ivine, for nothing natural
I ever saw so noble.

SHAKESPEARE.

THE morning at length arrived which was to introduce the long-talked-of visitor, and Sir Walter ushered in breakfast by observing, "Now, Emily, you will see a real hero: but mind, I have promised my lord you shall not be troublesome."

"Sir?"

"Mind what I say, I told Avondel I would not deceive him. Two ladies lived with me, but they were not every-day people. I said you were a good girl, and respected and admired him very much; but that you were not one of that sort who would want him to trot about the plantations with you, or to parade him round the neighbourhood. I told him you talked little, did not laugh loud, and gave yourself no flighty airs to catch those coxcombs who teach women to think us made to be monkey-keepers; but that I had found you a good nurse, and had taught you to play back gammon."

"I trust," said Lady Mackintosh, "you did equal justice to my character."

"I told him," replied Sir Walter, with a significant bow, "that I wished I had known you twenty years ago, when you were a very fine woman."

"I admire your frankness," answered the lady. "It was kind to apprize his lordship that no attack was intended, for as the poet sings, 'Cupid flies from tresses hoar.'"

The baronet was too much engrossed with the scheme of his own preparations to reply. "I shall receive him in great state," said he; "the tenants have set out to meet him, and dinner shall be served in the banqueting room, with a band of music playing in the stone gallery. You, Emily, must be full dressed, with all your jewels on; and remember, my lord is a very fine gentleman; nothing forward or finical will do, you must do the honours of the house quite easily and gracefully, without colouring and trembling as if you had never seen any body but your nurse. He has been used to the first courts in Europe, and all the grandeur and magnificence of the East. He is

the king of courtesy, and I want you to look like the queen."

"What a task have I undertaken," thought Emily, as she prepared for this formidable reception. "I protest I will never more pity a hero, or long to gaze on a blazing star." Her trepidation was not diminished by Lady Mackintosh observing, that she was attired for conquest. "'Tis well," added she, "that I had no designs. My simple vestments could not attract one look when eclipsed by such a blaze of splendour and beauty. Dear creature, what a tremor you are in. I own your uncle is very alarming, but I will support you. As I live, the cavalcade is coming down the avenue. When it enters the porter's ward the band is to strike up, 'See the conquering hero comes,' and you are to walk out of the saloon, followed by all the ladies, and the earl is to wait at the

folding doors opposite the grand entrance to be introduced in form,—quick quick, you wont be in time."

Emily had three times arranged and displaced her feathers, and at last fixed them in the most unbecoming position. She broke the clasp of her bracelet, forgot one of her sleeve-knots, and entered the saloon in a tremor just as the trumpets and clarionets began to play. She had scarcely time to take her prescribed station when Sir Walter advanced with an air of inexpressible satisfaction, and introduced a gentleman in the uniform of a general, adorned with several military and diplomatic orders. An air nobly majestic, a manner peculiarly graceful, and a countenance which, notwithstanding the cadaverous hue of sickness, spoke with sublime expression a feeling and exalted soul, announced that this was the earl of Avondel.

His introductory address to Emily was equally flattering and refined. H spoke of his impatience to thank her for her goodness to his most valued friend: nor did he then hurry from her with the air of one who has said a fine thing. He seemed to wait her reply, and it was not till he perceived she was incapable of making one, that he left her to recall her scattered thoughts, and moved round the circle shewing himself to be as expert in versatile politeness as in the more energetic language of peculiar esteem. He then placed his chair near Emily, and conversed with that respectful ease and general attention which soonest vanquish too timid delicacy. Sir Walter rubbed his hands in ecstacy, nodded significantly to his old neighbours, and smiled at their wives and daughters with a sort of silent bustle which indicated the difficulty he had to

restrain his own raptures, and his unwillingness to divert the attention of the company from the wonder he had introduced. Admiration soon succeeded to terror in the mind of Emily, while she considered how different Lord Avondel's manner was from any she had ever been accustomed to. "Other men," thought she, "by officious gallantry, study to display their own attainments, but the compliments of Lord Avondel inspire me with self-respect. Certainly he is the first and best of men. O shame upon an unthankful world that he is not the happiest."

The ease of general conversation which this "king of courtesy" contrived to substitute for that apprehensive reserve, which thirty years ago predominated in country parties, gave Miss Mandeville new opportunities of admiration. As his attentions were

every thing but oppressive or presumptuous, she had ventured to observe his features, as well as his words. Time had given his appearance all the grandeur of manly dignity, but slightly marked with symptoms of approaching decay. His eyes beamed with the keenest intelligence, and they seemed to derive additional lustre from the furrows of reflection deeply engraven on his brow. The general expression of his countenance was thoughtful majesty, but a smile lighted it up into ineffable benignity. She fancied he often suppressed a sigh from a kind determination not to check the hilarity his presence inspired, or abate the delight of his host, whose looks continually repeated with exultation, "This is the man who saved my life."

"I wonder," thought Emily, "how with so much innate grandeur he has contrived to infuse so much frankness

and vivacity into our party. We were all trembling with awe before he entered, and now all but myself are quite comfortable. I wish I durst speak to him, he will think me an absolute fool. Surely he cannot be uncandid, he cannot put such harsh constructions on the effect of true simplicity as my uncle intimates."

The day closed, and Emily still continued wishing but unable to remove the unfavourable impressions which she felt assured her reserve must make on her noble guest. Indeed, if she could have subdued her own terrors, the fixed attention of Lady Mackintosh would have chilled her presumption. Even when she retired to her own apartment, hoping to ruminate at leisure, that mirror of propriety, faithful to her duty of duenna, glided after her to develope her sentiments concerning the stranger, "This is ex-

tremely impertinent," thought Emily, "but I will be guarded."

"I hope, my love," inquired her ladyship, "your expectations concerning our noble inmate are quite answered?"

"Perfectly so," returned the young lady, with an air of nonchalance to mislead sagacity.

"And you do think him the most wonderful wonder of wonders that ever was wondered at?"

"Yes, the very greatest."

"What a discerning young creature," said her ladyship laughing. "But Sir Walter has seen very little of the world, and is so fond of the extraordinary."

"I quite agree with your ladyship."

"The earl is very high, but a phœnix you know is allowed to be proud. Do you think him so very, that is, so superlatively handsome?"

"Proud, handsome! I did not much observe him, madam."

"O, Miss Mandeville, is this candour and sincerity?"

A bright thought shot into Emily's mind to turn the tables on her persecutor. "If I did look at him often," said she, "you must abide the result of a severer scrutinizer than I am, for I protest he was always gazing on your ladyship."

"Piqued, by all that is fretful," thought the fair widow, not much displeased at having the observation she had already made thus confirmed by the jealousy of a rival. "My love," said she, pressing Emily's hand, "you know he might as well be gazing on the cold splendour of the watery moon. Come, you only rally; I heard the elegant compliments he addressed to you."

"As the relation of his fellow sol-

dier, madam; I am not the vain self-important girl to suppose, that so awkward a novice as I know I appeared to day could have any independent claim to the compliments of a man like Lord Avondel. He saw me the niece of Sir Walter Mandeville, and every mark of respect he paid me was a delicate tribute to friendship."

"Delicate tribute to friendship! Such a man as Lord Avondel! This young creature's heart is in a fine way," thought Lady Mackintosh; "ladies of her stamp of character always grow more kind in their expressions as they intend to be more provoking." "Why, I confess my dearest love," said she, "I never saw you appear to so little advantage, nor so ill dressed, as to day. You coloured, and stammered, and fluttered your fan, instead of carelessly playing with it thus. And, as the poet said, the feast was sold not

given, for instead of twice pressing the guests to eat, had it not been for me every body would have sat with empty plates. I don't mean to distress you, but indeed you never answered Mr. Cheerly when he asked you to take wine, and you sent turtle to Sir Humphry Cramwell without one morsel of green fat. I was very sorry for the poor girls, knowing he would go home out of humour, and one of them said she was sure you were not well. But I will go there with you tomorrow and make an apology."

"It will save him one oath," returned Emily, "when the gout pays him its next visit. But indeed you must bear the blame. Your manner and appearance so struck Lord Avondel, that he was continually taking up my attention with questions about you, and, to frustrate any hope he might have formed, I at last told him, that

though in compliment to the day you had cast off your weeds of woe, and appeared all ease and gaiety, you were absolutely inflexible on the point of a second attachment."

"Oh," said Lady Mackintosh, relapsing into the dolorous, "I could not help thinking as I sat at table, how different Sir Walter's present idol is from that friend I shall ever deplore. Sir Jeremiah's was true humility, true good nature. He had no artifice, no stately hauteur. He never strove to seem above every body else. Good night, sweet Emily, peaceful be thy slumbers. Alas! my thoughts will be in the mausoleum."

Miss Mandeville almost wished her person there also, as she secured her door against any further intrusion than the very unpleasant reflections her faithful friend had introduced respecting her embarrassment. It grieved

her that it had actually been observed by the company. Yet none but very illiberal people could think it extraordinary, that a young lady bred in retirement should feel distressed at playing the hostess on so public an occasion, and for the avowed purpose of doing honour to a man of Lord Avondel's celebrity and nice discernment. If the hero of the day still possessed great personal attractions, he was at least old enough to be her father; and is a man of forty-two, neither gay nor fortunate, so very irresistible, or was she so prompt to love, that no cause but a wish for conquest could be assigned for the confusion of a girl of twenty, heiress to many thousands? For the first time in her life she wished to know how many, and whether they were equal to the support of a very splendid establishment?

She then reverted to the remainder

of Lady Mackintosh's observations. Were pride and craft so conspicuous in Lord Avondel as to be discerned by a shallow observer, and yet appear to her in the commendable form of dignity and wisdom? His superiority was so indisputable that it seemed not even to require the support of defensive warfare. It was evident he could not receive information from any of the company, yet occasionally he played the listner's part with a grace which proved he saw no danger in condescension. He introduced no topic with a view to self aggrandisement or display, and highly grateful as his attentions were to those who received them he seemed more anxious that no one should be pained by his disregard. Proud men are fond of flattery. If Lord Avondel were proud how abundant was his caution and self command, for he received every compliment with such noble neg-

ligence, that neither his words, look, nor manner shewed he regarded praise. Emily however remarked, that whoever had been very particular or happy in their eulogiums received from him in the course of the evening some appropriate and elegant return, or was allowed an opportunity of appearing in a favourable point of view. What discrimination and discernment did such behaviour evince? Compare him to Sir Jeremiah Mackintosh, absurd! 'Twas plain such a woman's remarks were not worth regarding.

"And yet," said Emily, "he is not happy. 'Tis rankling grief, not time, that has engraven those deep furrows on his awful brow. With every amiable, every exalted quality he is wretched. What must the world be, if even an Avondel could not pass through it without enduring the shipwreck of his peace? My dear aunt Selina, too, with

all her virtue and goodness, is unhappy. Is sorrow the unavoidable lot of great talents and strong feeling? O that I could shelter my orphan head in safe obscurity! What wretched companions shall I find ignorance and susceptibility."

She now recollected the picture she had seen at Lime Grove, her view of it was very transient; it represented a man in the bloom of youth, ruddy with health, and animated with joy and hope. Time and change of circumstances, added to indisposition, must have made such an alteration that the picture could no longer resemble the original. The expression in the eyes, however, was similar, and so peculiar that she more than ever wished to know her aunt's early history.

Sir Walter's exuberant joy was as troublesome to him as her perplexity was to Emily, and alike indisposed him

for sleep. They met early in the breakfast room. The enthusiasm of the baronet acted as a powerful panacea to cure all his maladies, and he fought over his old battles with unusual vivacity. He soon came to the never wearying tale of his own preservation, and had just lifted the sword of the Bavarian officer when his champion entered. Emily's eyes were filled with tears, and her uncle was not sufficiently attentive to the scruples of delicacy to avoid explaining their source. But the polished earl spared her blushes, by not perceiving any compliment to himself, while he warmly commended the piety which made her thus affected at recollecting the danger of her guardian. He intreated Sir Walter to avoid a subject which her tenderness could not bear. To overcome the cry of "No, no, 'tis not so," which the good baronet loudly vociferated, he entered into

military details which soon engrossed the attention of his old companion in arms. The Havannah was taken, and the heights of Quebec scaled, in description, till the war-worn soldiers forgot that they had any female auditors; and Lady Mackintosh, provoked that the battery of a new morning dress, mounted for the occasion, had done no execution, whispered Emily, that it would look improper if they staid too long with the gentlemen. But Sir Walter had no mind that they should retire. A project had taken possession of his imagination, and with him, the very "firstlings of his thoughts always became the firstlings of his hand."

"Why, my lady, why, Emily, you are not going to run away from us, so pleased as you are to hear about battles and sieges? I assure you, Avondel, that girl is in her heart a soldier. She has listened for hours to my account

of the campaign of 59, when you had a command in the second brigade, and she can repeat by heart the dispatch you sent to England at the conclusion of the Mahratta war."

"I highly respect the patriotic spirit of the ladies," returned Avondel, "but if they honour our pursuits with their attention, justice requires we should not be so self-engrossed as to trespass on their social claims. May I have the happiness, Miss Mandeville, of attending you on your morning excursion."

Emily, recollecting her uncle's interdiction against trotting a hero round the plantations, or parading him among the neighbours, was silent.

"My sweet friend," said Lady Mackintosh, "suffers from the recollection of some minute oversight yesterday, and proposes calling on the friends she has displeased by way of conces-

sion." She then, in the kindest manner imaginable, informed Sir Walter of his niece's mistakes and negligencies. Unquestionably she had no intention to check his exuberant good humour, and she owned it was conjectured that her dear love was dying with the head-ach. But the hospitable Baronet was peculiarly irritable on this subject; for as one of his grand objections to the society of ladies was, that they limited good cheer and circumscribed conversation, by expecting it to be addressed to themselves, so he tolerated their company when they were frank and unassuming, and not only covered the board with plenty, but pressed "the mantling goblet and the rich repast" on the diffident.

"And has Emily affronted any of my friends?" inquired Sir Walter.

"Not absolutely affronted. Come, you must not be so warm; the dear

timid creature is sufficiently pained by her own feelings."

Lord Avondel observed, that in an affair so truly arbitrary, it was much to be lamented an ingenuous mind should abandon itself to the impression of painful feelings. "The conclusion I drew from Miss Mandeville's behaviour," said he, "was, that the style of hospitality I so much admired at the European courts I have visited had happily been imported into England during my absence, and banished that ostentatious importunity which for ever reminds us that we are visitors. In the first circles on the continent you sit with the same ease as by your own fire-side. The only danger is, that as you enjoy all the comforts of home it is possible you may omit some of those expressions of gratitude to your entertainer which the ceremonious intreaties of some English ladies

continually remind you are expected by way of payment."

Sir Walter looked at Lady Mackintosh, and observed there was good sense in my lord's observation. Her ladyship answered, that she could not assent to a system which condemned the mistress of the house to act the part of nobody in her own family.

"Much depends on the manner in which a case is stated," said Lord Avondel." Suppose we say she sits with the benignant serenity of a goddess, and receives the voluntary homage of those who enjoy her bounty."

"Is it an unfair inference," inquired the lady, "to ask, if your lordship means to represent Miss Mandeville as the Goddess of Devonshire?"

"My creed," rejoined the earl, "rejects all local divinities, it equally abhors all undue humiliations and painful penances; and I deny the neces-

sity of Miss Mandeville's practising supererogatory acts of condescension. I flatter myself that such friendship and sensibility as you possess must be gratified by hearing, that what your fears deemed an omission really was a happy refinement."

Lady Mackintosh doubted whether the earl was a man of superior discernment, or only ironical; while Emily thought she should in time be quite at ease in his company. "He is all benignity, all goodness to me," was the remark which she made on this conversation. "He takes care that I shall not be oppressed, either by his own commendations or the unkindness of others. Would I had such a protector! how safe should I be under the guidance of so much wisdom and goodness."

Sir Walter took an early opportunity of sounding his friend on the pro-

ject to which I have already alluded. He determined to lead the conversation to Emily in rather an oblique way, and expressed his gratitude for the very great care and affection which Lady Mackintosh shewed her. Lord Avondel answered dryly, that their attachment did indeed seem very extraordinary.

"But Emily is a very extraordinary girl," was Sir Walter's reply. "Considering how few opportunities she has had of improving herself, I assure you she is very clever. She knows nothing but what she has learned from me and her ladyship. Her fortune is now four thousand a year; besides, I have declared her my heiress."

Lord Avondel continued silent.

"We think her tolerably handsome," said Sir Walter. The earl only said he did not consider himself a good judge of beauty.

The baronet resumed. "She has however the beauties of the mind, and I am certain she will make a very valuable wife; for I must own I am an altered man since she has lived with me, and a happier too, though she limits me to a pint of wine, and has the ragouts spoiled that I may not eat of them. She has almost broken me too of being in a passion, for I cannot bear to see her look miserable. I begin to think you and I were too harsh when we gave up women to the devil without any exceptions."

"Don't make me a party in your imprecations, Mandeville."

"Well, well, you looked what I spoke. But I was thinking as you now mean to fix in England I should advise you to marry."

"Nothing would so much enforce your advice as your setting me the example."

"Pshaw, I am not in jest, you are twenty years younger than I am, and neither maimed nor crippled."

"Except in my mind and fortune."

"Well, a good-tempered wife with an ample dower would repair those maladies. I tell you again I am serious, and I wonder a man of your good sense and courage should never have sufficient resolution to"——

"What?"

"Tear a worthless woman from your heart."

Avondel started; he struggled for self-command, yet could only say, "Avoid that subject." A pause ensued; the well-meaning Mandeville blamed his own temerity, and pressing the earl's hand, begged his pardon.

"You have taken me by surprise," said the earl. "It is not my heart but my memory which prevents me from enjoying peace. I am not the puling

slave of love, but keenly sensible of my early wrongs. As a proof, I have forborne to make any inquiries after the person to whom you allude. I know not whether she exist. I hope never more to hear her name; yet I owe her an obligation. She shewed me her fickle sex in its most consummate duplicity, and thus taught me to avoid their snares; I have never been deceived since."

"She was the only woman in the world who could have used you basely."

"And also the only one whose conduct could give me pain. But she had many advantages to second her innate power of tormenting. I was young, sanguine, credulous. It was a first attachment; I had a thousand romantic ideas of paradisaical bliss. Mercenary match-makers would have said I conferred an obligation.

There was a simplicity, a purity, an almost supernatural sweetness—Walter, I cannot bear to think—I am not always thus puerile. My return to England has suggested ideas of happiness, of domestic bliss"——

"Which might still be your's."

"Say how? you think my fortunes desperate, but I never can consent to espouse one of those archetypes of idiotism or deformity, whom fortune perches on a golden pedestal, to attract the mercenary devotees, who call avarice love, and then wonder that they are wretched. My wife must have many recommendations besides possessing sufficient acres for my maintenance. She must have generosity to approve my frankness, for if ever I form an honourable connection, the basis on my side must be the most unreserved and unqualified confidence."

"Well, blow yourself up if you

you please, only suppose yourself a lover."

"You must first find me a woman with such wealth as my wants require, and sufficient merit to engage me in the task of wooing her with some wish of being successful."

"I think all this very possible."

"Suppose me then giving a decent air to my bankrupt fortunes and shattered figure, the shadow of my former self. Conceive me studying to be agreeable, and courting her society till we were sufficiently acquainted for me to hazard my proposals without appearing impertinent."

Sir Walter rubbed his hands. "All very well, my dear Lord, now for your proposal."

"It requires some effrontery to state the preliminaries even to you. The lady must possess youth, wealth, personal agreeableness, elegant man-

ners, a placid temper, a superior understanding, (rated on the female scale) an improved taste, and a liberal heart. She must also have a decided preference for me. I will then tell her, that I have encumbered my patrimonial estate by heedless acts of private partiality and public munificence, by which I have made myself many implacable enemies, who hate the giver and deny the gift. I will tell her too, that as nature has unfitted me for the tool of a minister, or the herald of faction, my fortunes are, as respects myself, irremediable. I will tell her the fatigues I have undergone and the insalubrious climates I have inhabited; that I have engendered many diseases which, though they do not indicate early death, presage a more insupportable evil, a joyless, unthankful, unvalued life. And I will finish my recommendatory address with saying,

that the soul to which this fabric is attached is fretted by a long unavailing contest with injury and neglect, that I am disgusted with the world and dissatisfied with myself. I shall doubtless succeed in persuading this young, amiable, affectionate imaginary to pass a life of solitude, chagrin and solicitude with such a misanthrope. The scheme is feasible, Mandeville. Find me the woman who will be proof to this, and I will make her the faithful partner of all my cares."

The blank look of disappointment which Lord Avondel gradually introduced into Sir Walter's countenance deepened to despair before he finished his description, and with a peevish "pshaw" the baronet added, that he would reconcile any old maid in the kingdom to celibacy by such a style of courtship. "But," said he, "Avondel, you never shall persuade me that

this is your right and true self. Who that saw you the other day all life and spirits, when the room rang with your praises, and the heads of all you spoke to were turned, would suppose you to be a bankrupt bashaw, a melancholy humourist, a crusty invalid."

Lord Avondel assured his friend that this was really his every-day garb, and that whenever he was pleasant he had a masquerade suit on.

"The disguise," added he, "is painful, and I rejoice, my good old friend, that you promise we shall live in a quiet domestic way. I shall lounge over your grounds, look at your pictures, study the architecture of your castle, and enjoy that indolent delight which I have long sacrificed to the vain hopes of doing good to others."

The office of Cicerone was allotted to Emily, who now resolved to summon sufficient courage to convince her

illustrious guest, that she was not that rara avis, a lady dumb from choice. But she soon found herself in a most polite manner sent back to her original monosyllables. Her slender knowledge of the fine arts was lost in the superior intelligence which she addressed, and while his lordship seemed to acquiesce in her criticisms, he introduced opinions which corrected her mistakes.

In compliance with her uncle's commands, she one day seated herself at her harpsichord and attempted a canzonet, but the conviction that she was a very indifferent performer, exhibiting her talents to a connoisseur, made her finger weaker and her voice more tremulous. Yet Lord Avondel appeared to listen, leaned on her chair, turned over the pages of the music, praised her taste in selecting from the most approved masters, and asserted

that when she had acquired more self-confidence she would be a very pleasing performer. How kindly encouraging, and yet how nobly sincere. She rose with exultation to offer her seat to Lady Mackintosh, who, with coy reluctance, and all that pretty affectation which attends superior skill, suffered herself to be overcome by the intreaty of the company, and attempted "Love's a gentle generous passion." But the difference between real and pretended timidity is, that as the former always supposes itself capable of exercising more self command than at an emergency it finds possible, so the latter is apt to forget its disguise from the eagerness with which it listens to commendation. Lady Mackintosh warbled, quavered, mounted, sunk, flourished, and introduced every grace, till she was interrupted by a violent fit of coughing which unfortunately

seized Lord Avondel. Water was called for, but the best specific was the silence of the syren. Every attempt to speak renewed his Lordship's danger, and to avoid suffocation he was obliged to change his intended compliment into a most courtly bow. But the paroxysm had been so oppressive, that it was not till the conversation turned to something very different from music that Lord Avondel recovered his powers of utterance; and I presume a man of his high breeding would have thought it indecorous to revive a subject that had been so fully discussed.

Time only served to confirm Miss Mandeville's veneration for their guest. She saw elegance in all his actions; honour, dignity, and profound wisdom, in his sentiments. With equal wonder and delight she perceived a hero condescend to trifle, and adopt

that style of small talk which is very unjustly called lady's conversation. But though Hercules held the distaff at the court of Omphale, the lion's skin lay ready to be put on, while the demi-god gracefully reclined on the sofa, discussing the propriety of female ornaments or criticising the exercise of female ingenuity. She observed with pleasure, that though every commonplace civility and trite compliment was addressed to lady Mackintosh, his more refined attentions were paid to herself. Master of every modification of polite deportment, he was never reduced to the degrading necessity of being unpolite to avoid being insincere. She was convinced he saw her duenna's foibles: she was persuaded he must dislike a character so opposite to his own; but he made no insidious attempts to betray her to behave ridiculously, a popular species of wit since

known by the name of quizzing. The effulgence of his own social talents needed no foil to increase their lustre. He looked on envy and affectation with the pity of a superior mind, and he scorned to extort that preponderance to which he deemed himself entitled, by proving the bankrupt state of mental poverty. Emily believed herself a more important being from having spent a fortnight under the same roof with Lord Avondel; yet she could not recollect any proof of his attention which age, dependence, or deformity, would not have received from so complete a gentleman, if placed in her situation.

"And what," said she to herself, "should I wish for more. Weak, vain, confident girl; did I suppose Lord Avondel likely to be susceptible of my faint attractions! He who has travelled from court to court, and seen

whatever is great and fascinating in every climate, was he to preserve his heart from the charm of elegance and the lure of beauty to surrender it to a poor ignorant country girl, awkward and unformed in mind and person; one who blunders whenever she tries to be graceful, and even renders herself more disgusting when (actuated by that preference which would else do honour to her judgment) she attempts to be very agreeable? True, Lord Avondel never laughs at me, but then he is too well-bred to laugh at any one. If he thinks me more to be tolerated than Lady Mackintosh it is because he prefers natural absurdity to artificial."

Sir Walter's conclusions were very different. He narrowly observed Lord Avondel's behaviour to his niece, and to his own mind determined it to be so very lover-like as to promise success

to his project of uniting the preserver of his life with the heiress of his fortune. I must admit, the respectable veteran was so much of a novice in the laws of gallantry, that the common decorums which the habits of polite life *then* required from polite gentlemen to ladies, seemed to him quite courtship enough to win the Empress Queen. The reader will also remember, that I am speaking of those obsolete times when beauty had not been so well trained and disciplined by male nonchalance as to start up at the beckon of a distant partner, who dumbly signified that he condescended to endure the fatigue of lounging by her side down twenty couple, without disconcerting the fixed stupor of his high-bred melancholy by one speech or smile. Thirty years ago it was not expected that the leading men of fashion should loll on the ottomans with the self-contempla-

ting quiescence of an eastern sovereign, while ladies of the first distinction declared they were dying to sit down; nor did women of real character allow these bashaws, when they broke silence, to accost them with language fit only for the haram. It did not forward the success of a virtuous amoroso to talk of former scrapes and debauches, and a wife would not send compliments to her husband's chere amie without being thought splenetic instead of pleasant and obliging. And though Lord Avondel did not adopt the then country fashion of flying after the lady with a chair for fear she should not be able to see one, or overturning the mandarins, and maiming the lap-dogs, through extreme eagerness to prevent a beauty from deranging the architecture of her tete by stooping to pick up her fan, he certainly shewed as many attentions to Emily as would furnish enough of the

tender for a dozen modern marriages, and to convince her uncle that the sly girl had captivated the noble soldier.

As Sir Walter had not formed his military tactics by the system of Fabius, it is not surprizing that his domestic arrangements always marched in quick time. No sooner had he persuaded himself that Lord Avondel was as much in love as became a man of his understanding, than he resolved to try if his niece meant to play the very woman by starting a few whims. He might indeed have trusted to his own penetration, for he read enough of her heart to discover her preference, without extorting from her the confession of a predilection, which (however commendable) is always cruelly distressing to female delicacy to acknowledge. Miss Mandeville's character was frank and ingenuous, equally ardent and steady in her attachments, and timid from inexperience

and want of self-confidence. Little address was necessary to extort its bosom secret from a heart thus fashioned, especially when the inquirer, her respected guardian, told her he knew Lord Avondel admired her, and that their union was the favourite wish of his heart. Sinking on her uncle's shoulder, she welcomed the intelligence with tears of surprise and joy, and after expressing some fears that she never should deserve such good fortune, confessed the whole happiness of her life depended on Lord Avondel. Then, recollecting herself, she shrunk with terror from the discovery she had made, and extorted a solemn promise from her uncle not to inflict an incurable wound on her delicacy by a premature discovery of her affection to its revered object; a promise which he readily gave, and they parted mutually satisfied with each other.

CHAP. V.

"It is most just
"When women sue, they sue to be denied.
"You hate me, you despise me! you do well.
"For what I've done I hate and scorn myself.
"O night fall on me! I shall blush to death."
YOUNG.

THOUGH Sir Walter was resolved to abide by the promise which he had given to Emily, he thought there would be no harm in just sounding Lord Avondel, to know how he stood affected. A cautious lover might want a little stimulus, but as to his niece's secret he knew women always made a parade about those things, and therefore he would be very guarded.

He soon found a good opportunity for making his attack, as they enjoyed the sunshine of a fine frosty morning in one of the southern apartments. "I don't mean, my lord," said he, "to ask for compliments, but I must say you are grown at least twenty years younger since you have been with us." "My health," replied the earl, "is wonderfully improved, thanks to your early hours, salutary springs, relaxation from business, the absence of physicians, and those temperate habits which you say your Emily has introduced."

"Your Emily has introduced!" Very good, indeed, thought Sir Walter. "And I hope" said he, continuing his attack, "that our society has done you no harm; you seem to enjoy it. This you know is liberty castle, but I observe that instead of staying in the library, which you would have all to yourself, or strolling about alone, you

are generally with the ladies. Talk of turning hermit on your own estate, indeed! why you are more cut out for a family-man than any one I ever saw. I always told you, though I was an ass in company, you were born for society."

"Will you always insure me such society as I find in Mandeville castle?"

"Yes," replied the abrupt baronet, "if that would make you happy."

Lord Avondel sighed, and was silent.

"On my soul, my lord," continued his warm-hearted friend, "I wish the castle were yours. I never should have lived to possess it but for you. You have won it by your sword, and by heaven it shall be yours."

"Sir Walter, how rash and unjust!"

"No, not unjust, I tack a little incumbrance to it."

"My generous friend, I will not affect to misconceive your purpose; but as you are a man of sense and prin-

ciple, subdue this extravagant impulse of gratitude. It is unworthy of you in every point of view. Any common trooper would have rendered you the same service which my situation enabled me to perform, and you put an undue value upon a chance benefit to require a young lady to reward it with such a sacrifice."

"A sacrifice, Avondel?"

"Yes; recollect what I have before told you of my circumstances and temper."

"But if the girl thinks differently?"

"I will not hear such a suggestion. If I were such a coxcomb as to believe it possible that the young lady was interested in my favour, I would quit the castle immediately. I equally abhor taking advantage of your romantic generosity, and of the inexperience of an amiable heiress. My enemies shall never have the opportunity of

saying, that having vainly tried the path of ambition, I found female susceptibility a surer guide to opulence, especially when a sybil of twenty held the golden bough."

"Fine talking," said Sir Walter, swinging his foot with a discontented air, "who is romantic now? Keep yourself poor and miserable, indeed, to please the world, who if you were rich and gay would be very fond of you! I want to know, sir, what objections you have to my Emily?"

"None. The point between us is, she ought to make strong objections to me."

"Pshaw! What if I were to say—Well *suppose* she makes no objections?"

"Again I must peremptorily forbid you to use such language. The delicacy of her manners convinces me that she would never volunteer her af-

fections, and the disparity of our years and habits makes it impossible I should be her choice if she had the liberty and the power of selection. I perceive your drift, my friend: the whole proposal springs from your partiality, with which Miss Mandeville esteems it her duty to comply. She is a prize to which most men, circumstanced as I am, would direct their attention; but by the untarnished honour of a soldier I swear, I have behaved to her with the same sacred chariness of affection as if she had been my daughter. I have attempted neither to inflame her fancy, nor to warp her judgment. I have neither disguised my own faults, nor magnified her attractions. I have never asked myself if her fortunes would repair the waste of mine, and her sympathy heal the wounds of my excoriated heart. I have beheld her as an insulated being, fenced round by every

bond of hospitality, honour, and regard for her future good;--as one with whom I could never form any tie but that of friendship; and my wishes for her happiness are as pure from any intermixture of self as your own. I again repeat, if the riches of her ancestors were trebled in her portion, I would not renounce the gratifying integrity of my present feelings, for the degrading consciousness that I had taken advantage of your attachment to me to make those riches mine."

Sir Walter, who felt very indignant at what he construed into a contempt for his niece, was softened by this explanation; and holding out his hand as a sign of reconciliation exclaimed, "you are a noble fellow, Avondel; I dont know what to make of you."

"You shall make any thing of me," replied the earl, "but an avaricious

doating coxcomb, who persuades himself that a lovely girl is grown enamoured of his sallow visage and formal figure. If I have now convinced you, that it is not the variable opinion of the million but the lasting reproaches of my own heart, that I fear, I will not order my chariot, which I was on the point of doing a few minutes ago."

The gentlemen separated, Sir Walter, much disconcerted, at perceiving his favourite plan suspended by an objection which, had it been started by any one else, he would have called an artifice; and Lord Avondel, fully resolved upon taking an early opportunity to leave Castle Mandeville.

The alteration in the behaviour of the gentlemen soon became apparent to Emily. Sir Walter had lost his exuberant good humour and hilarity; the dinner became ill-dressed, the claret

tasted of the cork, he rated his butler, and kicked his old spaniel from the hearth-stone. Avondel was silent, and absent, or talked to Lady Mackintosh.

"I am betrayed," thought Emily, "and rejected; I never can survive this degradation." She took the earliest opportunity to ask her uncle, if any thing had passed between him and Lord Avondel? Sir Walter at first answered, "nothing to the purpose;" and then owned that he had sounded him, but could make nothing out of him.

"How cruel," said Emily, "has been your kindness, but I will shut myself from the world forever. You have taught Lord Avondel to despise me."

Moved at this unusual emotion in the gentle Emily, Sir Walter intreated her to be patient, and assured her Lord Avondel had a high respect for her.

"No, Sir," continued she "I will

not be beholden to his pity. Proud and magnanimous as he is, I will not have him persuaded to accept me."

"No fear of that," said Sir Walter, "the man is as stubborn as a mule. He will not be persuaded."

"And have you stooped to intreat him?" said Emily, "have you offered me, sir? have you acknowledged my folly?"

The baronet grew warm, "a pretty scrape have I got into here to be rated on both sides! Plague on your fine feelings and nice notions, say I. What had I to do with them; I did not want to marry myself; and here one raves because I want to force your inclinations, and the other because I cannot manage him. I tell you, girl, Lord Avondel likes you well enough, I can see that, but he wont marry you."

"Dear sir, but you have not discovered my attachment?"

"If I had, I tell you it would have done no good. The world would say he married you for your fortune, and you would see somebody you liked better, and a vast deal of high-flown trumpery, and no sound reasons."

Sir Walter paused, and at last exclaimed, " 'tis a noble fellow after all." Emily, whose indignation had hitherto suppressed her tenderness, now burst into tears. Her uncle felt for her distress, but like many impetuous people, his way of shewing compassion was by being out of humour. To comfort her, he assured her that she had acted very imprudently; that women ought to wait till men declared their intentions; and he concluded with lamenting the dilemma in which he was placed, adding such an encomium on his friend as almost justified Emily for indulging a premature attachment.

"If," said she to herself, "my pas-

sion be but concealed from the object of it, or if he have but greatness of soul enough not to despise me for my veneration of whatever is noble and good, I will not only submit to his rejection with patience, but I will feel a sort of elevation on account of that preference, which I will ever cherish. My dear aunt's fears for me on my introduction into the world are now obviated. She need not dread the mazes and allurements of the rake or the worldling. The heart that is devoted to an Avondel is guarded against every wile, and proof to every temptation. From principles of exalted honour, he may refuse to partake my fortunes, but in wish, in purpose, in entire devotedness of affection, I will ever be united to his."

She now considered what would be the best method of confirming his delicate generosity, and at first resolved to assume a more cold and distant

manner, but though she was unread in tales of love, her heart told her this was the behaviour which strong affection fell into so naturally that it could not be called a disguise. She then determined to be very gay, and to flirt with all the male visitors; but recollecting she was ill at deceit, she feared her laughs would become hysterical, and her flirtations end in tears. Besides, was it possible to impose upon a man of the earl's penetration? Could she bear to degrade herself in his eyes, or to lose the good opinion he professed to entertain of her sense and delicacy, by levity, folly, or coquetry? No, she would trust to nature only, and if she could not excite love would not deserve contempt.

Affairs continued in this state a few days, which happily being devoted to company, relieved the irksomeness of Emily's situation. It gave her, too,

an opportunity of observing Lord Avondel's behaviour when he mixed in society, which presented the same bold but correct outline. Whether the learned, the polished, the upright, or the worthy, came in contact with him, he still appeared better informed, more elegant, more disinterested, more benevolent. "He has refused me," said Emily, "yet still he is the first and best of men."

The family-party were standing round the fire one evening, discussing the events of a visit from which they had just returned, when Lady Mackintosh bluntly asked Lord Avondel's opinion of the master of the house; and not satisfied with a general answer, inquired if he considered him to be a man of penetration.

"Certainly," replied the earl, "he is shrewd and sagacious."

"And did your lordship remark

what he said was the best way of supporting falling fortunes?"

"It was unlucky," replied the earl, "that I should be inattentive to what I might have found *useful* information."

"O, I can repeat it. He said, when a gentleman was quite worn out by disappointments with one sex, it was right to direct his attention to the other. Nothing is in general so easy as a matrimonial speculation." The remark was sufficiently easy to be understood, but she pointed it by a significant glance at Emily.

For the first time since he had resided at the castle, Lord Avondel was embarrassed. He had long discovered Lady Mackintosh's latent maliciousness, but the superior effrontery of this attack roused his resentment, and excited his surprize. He was too generous to look at the blushing and almost

fainting Emily; recollecting his wonted self-command he turned a firm and indignant eye on her tormentor.

"And did he not proceed to name the star that would guide a diffident wooer to certain success?"

"He left that to the penetration of the person for whom his advice was designed."

"Trusting, I presume, that he was acquainted with the story of the Ephesian matron. I will trouble you, madam, to return my compliments with many thanks."

"My dear Emily," said Lady Mackintosh, recovering from that sort of hysterical laugh with which she always affected to conceal boiling anger, "you don't seem to relish raillery."

"'Tis because," said his lordship, still avoiding to look on the trembling girl, "Miss Mandeville fastidiously requires some requisites in humour

with which your ladyship dispenses. But I recollect why you are thus severe upon me. I promised you a song this morning, and I hope discharging my debt will restore to you your wonted attribute of mercy." Emily's harp stood in the room; he flung his hand over the chords with a minstrel's fire, which he accompanied with the following stanzas.

Woman, dost thou seek to gain
  A captive worthy of thy sway,
List the minstrel's holy strain,
It breathe's not flattery's pæans vain,
  But truth's severer lay.

Warp not beauty's angel form
  By affectation's vile grimace,
A temper free from passion's storm,
A heart with gentler virtues warm,
  Must fix the triumphs of thy face.

Tho' that face like Hebe's glow,
  Tho' in each act the graces beam,
Tho' o'er thy lands Pactolus flow,
Tho' India's di'monds gem thy brow;
  Nor wealth nor beauty wakes esteem.

She asserts her sex's power
Who scorns by borrow'd aids to shine,
The woodland lily's pensile flower
Transported from its native bower,
Shall round the crest of glory twine.

Lord Avondel bowed to Emily, and contriving that the same obeisance should civilly glide to Lady Mackintosh, retired the moment he had finished his song. Emily was incapable of conversation, and Lady Mackintosh too much mortified to sanction Sir Walter's encomium on his friend's vocal powers. He had been engrossed by the old bachelor privilege of knocking out the fire by way of improving it, and did not attend to the previous altercation, therefore he did not discover any peculiar meaning in the song.

Miss Mandeville's reflections this night were peculiarly soothing. The earl's manner of supporting her from

Lady Mackintosh's coarse raillery was as delicate as prudery could exact, as warm and generous as love could require. "Surely," she began to think, "he cannot be quite indifferent to me. If compassion to me, or a keen sense of indecorum, prompted his severe rebuke to Lady Mackintosh, he need not to have obliquely complimented me as the drooping lily. He is superior to the pitiful arts of male coquetry. I think he does not dislike what he has seen of my character, but wishes to investigate it more clearly before he commits his honour and happiness to my trust. 'Tis mine to shew him that I can be as firm as I have been precipitate, and if I silently model my manners according to his ideas of excellence, in time he must love me as the reflection of himself, at least he will if he resembles other men. But how difficult is it to win a heart which is

proof to all the snares of selfishness, whether they assume the shape of avarice or vanity?"

Emily met Lord Avondel with unusual familiarity in the morning, but found him stiffened into more invincible reserve. Lady Mackintosh recollected that she had been defeated, and resolved to attack her enemy now he seemed less able to dispute the victory.

"I hope, my lord," said she, handing him the chocolate, "you did not suffer from your extraordinary exertions last night. I fancy you combined the old characteristic of the minstrel; poet and musician, I mean."

"I only sung a translation of one of Lady Paulina Monthermer's canzonets, madam."

"Indeed, but you gave it a most superior effect by your expression and look."

"Again I must be just to the au-

thor, and affirm, that I am not able to give even a faint idea of the commanding influence this composition received from that lady's voice, manner, and person, when she spoke it as an impromptu at the Marchesa Cagliani's conversazione."

"And pray who is this extraordinary lady?"

"An Italian improvvisatrice, madam, but not a professed one. 'Tis a talent she occasionally exercises to delight her friends. Her father was a noble Florentine, and she is now the wife of General Monthermer, head of the military department, and member of the supreme council, at the settlement of which I was governor."

"Young and handsome, I suppose?"

"Her appearance is still very youthful. Her mother was a Greek lady, and Paulina's features and person ex-

hibit that symmetry and commanding beauty which one may suppose inspired a Phidias and an Apelles."

"Bless me, my lord, and accomplished too?"

"In the highest degree; upon the whole, complete mistress of every art of fascination."

"I am afraid," said Lady Mackintosh, "we must say, poor General Monthermer; such a wonderful wife must be hard to manage, and I think we English ladies ought to feel piqued at this decided superiority being given to a foreigner."

The earl declared he was ready to be judged by Emily, whether he had said any thing to pique a truly English lady.

Emily replied, that they ought to respect his lordship for being just to merit of every description. "If," said she, "we may judge of Lady Paulina

by the specimen you have given us of her sentiments, she claims even higher commendations than those you have afforded her."

Breakfast being over Emily rose to retire. Avondel pressed her hand to his lips, and with an air of grave respect thanked her for all her goodness to him. How unusual was this address. Confused and silent, she followed Lady Mackintosh, who had already left the room.

"I have a painful part to perform, my good friend," said the earl to Sir Walter. "It is to thank you for your noble hospitality, and to bid you farewell."

"Impossible!" returned the baronet, "you shall not stir."

"My carriage waits at the gates. I durst not trust myself to your importunities, till I had arranged every thing for my departure. When I tell you

that imperious duty calls me hence, and when I most truly assure you that the weeks I have spent here have been the happiest I have long known, you will only say, go and do what you ought."

"Is it public or private business that calls you from us?"

"A mixture of both. I received a dispatch last night. You must not urge me."

"But when will you return?"

"That depends upon circumstances I cannot command. My affairs at Avon park call for immediate inspection, and I fear they will long require my presence."

Sir Walter paused, and then exclaimed, "what shall I do with my poor little Emily." Though he uttered this rather as an ejaculation than by way of asking advice, Lord Avondel took occasion to point out an error in his treatment of that young lady. "She

will be one of the first fortunes in the kingdom," said he, " and she is now arrived at an age when it is proper to form a suitable establishment. Do not therefore confine her from the society in which she ought to mix."

"Why, don't I take her every where?" resumed the baronet. "The Mandevilles always lived splendidly, and I keep open house. I give dinners to the hunt, and invite all the officers. We visit every body within twenty miles, and she goes to all the concerts, races, and balls, my four horses can drag her to. And to tell you the truth, one reason why I have my Lady Mackintosh here is to go out with her, for she has very good health, and is not afraid of having her neck broken over our hills by moonlight."

Lord Avondel smiled. "Transplant your fair charge," said he, "to London: that is the sphere in which the

heiress of two illustrious families must in future move. Let me add, suffer her to shine without her attending satellite."

"Why Lady Mackintosh knows the world."

"The world is a vague phrase, my good friend, and often intimates a narrow limit. Of this I am persuaded, Lady Mackintosh's world affords no attractions for your good little Emily."

"I observe," said Sir Walter with a sigh, "you and her ladyship seldom agree in your opinions."

"We have moved in different circles," replied the earl coldly, "but let us confine ourselves to a subject infinitely more interesting, the happiness of Miss Mandeville."

"Pshaw, Avondel, that cannot be interesting to you, or you would not behave as you have done."

"Sir Walter," returned the earl,

"would you not think it unjust to persuade your niece to sign a deed which transferred her estate to a stranger, without fully apprizing her of the legal consequences? It would be still more unjust to entrammel her person by an indissoluble connection, before she had ascertained the extent of her pretensions, or exercised the powers of discriminating between various pretenders. A fox-hunting debauchee, or an adventurer in a red coat, willing as they might be to wed your acres, cannot offer your niece a heart worthy her acceptance. Even such a one as myself may deserve her preference, opposed to such rivals. Shew her men of rank and fashion, of years, tempers, and fortunes suitable to her own, and suffer her unbiased judgment to decide. When a chaperon is wanted choose one who has discretion and address, not an incum-

brance in the shape of a protectress. The dowager of our late general, the Marquis of Glenvorne, strikes me as one who would be a real friend and able adviser. I knew her and her son at Florence; you can need no introduction to her, and Miss Mandeville will soon gain her favour."

"Why our estates join," exclaimed the baronet.

"Indeed," replied Avondel, and suppressing a sigh added, "that is fortunate, the young man is worthy and amiable."

Sir Walter now silently contemplated the figure he should make in London parties, and wishing for some further inducements to reconcile him to his own outre appearance, asked if he should see Lord Avondel in town?

"Nothing can be more uncertain than my destination," replied the earl. "But cheer up, my brave veteran. No

one is ridiculous who walks uprightly in the path of duty. You have not feared balls and bullets, you have stormed camps and castles, and are you appalled at the shafts of ridicule, or afraid of the missile deaths which lurk in the frowns of an incensed dowager at a card-table when you have lost the odd trick?

"I remember the time," said Sir Walter, brightening at his friend's raillery, "that this very Marchioness told her friends, I might if I chose be a very fine gentleman."

"I fear," said the earl, rising, "'tis too late in life for either of us to change our characters, let us then endeavour to preserve them untainted." He sighed deeply as he spoke, and wringing his friend's hand emphatically exclaimed; "Farewell, may Miss Mandeville's sun rise auspiciously and your's set with tranquillity."

"You will leave us, then?" said Sir Walter. "Stay till I call Emily."

"I have taken leave of her," replied Avondel, and hastily threw himself into the chariot.

This sudden departure produced universal dismay; but if Miss Mandeville read in it the destruction of her newly-excited hopes, she also received from it a confirmation of her long-cherished passion. His parting advice, which, with his wonted frankness, the baronet communicated to her, exalted his character to an eminence which almost seemed fabulous. She could no longer hope, and scarcely wished her attachment to be concealed from its object, for she felt that her delicacy was safe in his guardianship. The adroitness with which he had avoided a formal adieu, which must have made her partiality more conspicuous, the concern he expressed for her welfare, the care

he had taken to preserve her from those improprieties which attend inexperience at its first introduction into the world, by recommending her to an adviser of such untainted reputation and fashionable celebrity as the Marchioness of Glenvorne, all argued such disinterestedness and magnanimity, that she almost wished every sentiment of her heart were entrusted to his consummate generosity. "Surely," said she, "he is an exception to the proverb, that men always despise an easy conquest."

Though her former expectations of the pleasures a London winter affords, had changed to indifference, not to say disgust, for any scene in which Lord Avondel did not appear, she determined to urge her uncle to execute the plan he had advised, with a secret hope that this compliance with her hero's advice would intimate her entire devo-

tion to his will. She sometimes thought this excursion was proposed merely as a trial of her constancy, and she was willing to stake the future happiness of her life on the durability of her attachment.

If any thing agreeable was connected with the idea of her journey, it was being delivered from the society of Lady Mackintosh, who had been more desirous to secure herself a future establishment and present accommodation than to prevent Emily from forming improper connections. Her zeal to prevent the young lady's introduction to her uncle had, indeed, apparently changed to violent professions of attachment, but she always saw in the acknowledged heiress a Hushai come to defeat the counsels of Achitophel. The attractions of real gentleness and sincere tenderness are never so strongly felt, as when they are contrasted with

plausibility and over-strained suavity. Sir Walter soon shewed a preference for his good little girl, and the former favourite, discovering that the present could only be displaced by a permanent connection, craftily endeavoured to betray her into one which would eventually degrade her in her uncle's eyes. The characters which Lord Avondel alluded to in his speech to Sir Walter, were therefore encouraged to become bold pretenders to the heiress of Castle Mandeville, though their manners were too common-place, and their mode of attack too mean, to deserve being recorded in this narrative. Suffice it to observe, that even diffidence possesses some degree of conscious dignity, and simplicity is not quite destitute of discernment. The manner in which Emily treated Lady Mackintosh's *worthy friends* was not unnoticed by Lord Avondel, than

whom no one better understood, or more strictly enforced, the laws of female decorum.

Disappointed in her own views of matching her friend to some worthless fortune-hunter, who would reward her for the introduction, Lady Mackintosh next considered if she could turn the young lady's visible predilection for Lord Avondel, and Sir Walter's anxiety to accomplish a union between his niece and friend, to her own advantage. This event, she knew, must considerably diminish the golden harvest of which she had once entertained such sanguine hopes, but she thought that by narrowly watching the marriage writings she might secure to Sir Walter the power of making a good settlement. To this purpose, in all her tete-a-tetes with him, she pathetically lamented the evil consequences of present possessors fettering themselves

with such legal ties as prevented them from improving future contingencies. No one, she said, knew how a match would turn out. Many people were not what they seemed to be. There was no telling what at some future time we might want ourselves; and lastly, uncles and fathers were never so respected as when they kept the staff in their own hands.

The uncommon turn of Lord Avondel's character prevented Sir Walter from profiting by these sage conclusions. He had absolutely declined opening his arms to receive a charming girl who adored him. Emily then was doomed to singleness, of course would never quit her uncle; and Lady Mackintosh must direct her artillery to some less-guarded citadel, as she was not one of those who are willing to waste their lives in a hopeless siege.

It happened fortunately, that a lady

of her acquaintance was in momentary expectation of the arrival of her son, who, having long possessed a lucrative appointment in India, was desirous of enjoying the fortune he had acquired by taking a wife and forming a splendid establishment. It is well known that a dowager candidate for hymenial advancement, who, like Addison's widow, means to have a settlement in every county in England, somewhat resembles an universal philanthropist. "Rutilians, Trojans, are the same to her," and her heart can vibrate from soldier to sailor, from the landed to the mercantile interest. She had heard that Mr. Caddy intended to marry as soon as he got to England, and she resolved she would no longer waste her Circassian bloom, or frizzle her auburn caxon, among the insensibles.

The day after Lord Avondel's de-

parture, she informed Sir Walter how much she regretted, that she was not able any longer to deny Mrs. Caddy's request of meeting her long absent son. The baronet, thus happily relieved from the difficulty of intimating to a lady, that she must shift her quarters, declared his vexation at finding he must remove too, as business had called him and Emily to London. Lady Mackintosh now offered to defer her visit till his return, as her physician had prescribed London to her this spring to restore the elasticity of her nerves, which had been unbraced by sorrow and confinement. No hint was given that a trio would be acceptable to the Mandevilles; and though she also recollected, that the world might think it indecorous in her to throw herself in the Nabob's way, Emily never assisted her delicacy with one request that she would continue

to act as her guardian. The friends therefore separated, but I must record Lady Mackintosh's parting benediction: "Conquest attend you, my dear love, and may you find the jessamines less impenetrable than the greybeards."

CHAP. VI.

"I blush to think what I have said.
"But fate has wrested this confession from me;
"Go on and prosper in the paths of honour,
"Thy virtue will excuse my passion for thee."

ADDISON.

MISS Mandeville recollected that her correspondence with her aunt had been suspended during Lord Avondel's residence at the castle, and she resolved to renew it previous to her departure on her London expedition; she accordingly addressed to her the following letter.

"To Lady Selina Delamore.

"Castle Mandeville, February 18th, 1779.

"Our plans are again altered, my

dearest aunt. Sir Walter is determined to shew me London. He has taken a house in Berkley square, where we are to continue till the end of May. I must not think of leaving him, but I hope to be allowed to spend part of next summer at Lime Grove.

"We have had a most interesting visitor at the castle, of whom, when we meet, I shall have much to say. If the world resembled him, it would not be that intricate and dangerous labyrinth which all who have trodden its mazes describe. For myself, the first wish of my soul is retirement. I know I am unequal to the busy conflict of public life; the envious and malicious will wound my heart, the confident will oppress me. I know not which I shall most feel, the sarcasms of others, or the self-reproach which my errors and inadvertencies will perpetually excite. I wish this

London introduction were over, and that I were again under your kind protection. Of one thing, however, be assured, my heart is perfectly safe from the assaults of fops and libertines. It has aimed highly, my dearest aunt, and now it is invulnerable; and who that has had an opportunity of observing you can attach ridicule and discontent to the single state, or uselessness to retirement? True, you are dejected, but I will never believe your sorrows are the result of folly or misconduct. I will not press you upon a point on which I have often heard you say you could not be communicative, but the hard treatment which you and other worthy people meet with is one reason why I hate the world.

"But I shall forget one principal reason for writing to you. It is to ask if you know the Marchioness of

Glenvorne? I am to solicit her protection. I have lately taken a dislike to chaperons and female friends: I mean such as one generally meets with, not to such a friend as she who took me into her care, a wayward, sickly, neglected orphan, who cherished me with incessant attention, and to whose wisdom and goodness I owe the few commendable qualities I possess.

"My uncle lives in too hospitable a style to allow me to cultivate accomplishments. I send you the only drawing I have been able to finish, but I must explain its history. A gentleman was praising the lily of the valley, and said it was worthy to twine round the crest of glory. It was only in a song, my dear aunt, so there was nothing in it; but I thought the idea was elegant, and I wished to embody it. But pray don't suppose the figure

of glory like this gentleman; indeed it has not the most distant resemblance. The performance is wretched, but you will value it as mine.

"Write to me, my dearest aunt, and inform me most particularly of your own health and spirits. Remember me to the two doctors, to Wilson, and all your little suite. I am afraid they would not now call me the sprightly Columbine. It is this excursion which so depresses my spirits; yet I must go. My uncle's affection for me increases every hour, and I revere his integrity and untutored worth. Yet, my best friend, I now more parculiarly need the soothing tenderness with which you always treated your ever grateful and affectionate

"EMILY MANDEVILLE."

There needed no ghost to tell Lady Selina, that the medium through which

her niece now looked at the world was a mist raised by that knave Cupid; or to connect the interesting visitor with the figure of glory, which, though laboured with all Emily's little skill, was not sufficiently like Lord Avondel to be recognized by an old acquaintance. Lady Selina's anxiety for her beloved girl was, however, much relieved by hearing that she had aimed highly, and she trusted there was so much meaning in the allusion to the lily, that her dear Emily would soon find she lived in a very tolerable sort of a world. She was convinced of her rectitude, prudence, and delicacy, and highly approved the wisdom, as well as the kindness, of Sir Walter's intention of introducing her to the circles in which she was born to move. It was a scheme which she had long meditated, nor were ill health and broken spirits the only obstacles

to its execution. Years of seclusion had robbed her of almost all her early connections, and from the few by whom she was remembered Emily would reap no advantage by appearing under her auspices.

Knowing that there is no surer method of confirming an attachment than to argue against it, Lady Selina took no farther notice of her niece's chagrin than to ascribe it to some little perplexity arising from Lady Mackintosh, of whose impertinence Emily had formerly complained. "London air, my love," said she, "is an excellent specific for the spleen, which is engendered by associating with country gossips, and I am convinced Lady Glenvorne will soon remove your disgust to chaperons. You will find her the true woman of fashion; polite, liberal, correct in her principles, and engaging in her behaviour. I will not

depreciate the advantages, disguise the inconveniencies, or deny the duties of celibacy, or retirement, but the very circumstances of our existence tell us, that few people can live entirely for themselves. At your age, Emily, I little thought I should have passed through life unconnected. With gratitude to Providence, I acknowledge the many comforts I have experienced, but, as far as temporal felicity is considered, my lot has been much less enviable than Lady Glenvorne's, who was once my intimate companion. Nor can I, in the fulness of my affection, wish you better fortune, than to be united to a man who resembles the deceased Marquis in every thing but his early death.

"You are not wrong, Emily, to aim highly, in every sense of the word; for though rank and fortune are not synonymous with happiness, if we are

born in an elevated station we cannot innocently submit to self-degradation without some most urgent reasons. We ought not, then, to indulge ourselves in using common-place invectives against the infelicities which we discover in our lot. It has been chosen for us by a Being infinitely good and wise, who does not expect from the prince the mechanical industry of the manufacturer, or from the children of rank and affluence the contemplative exercises of a recluse. The fortune of your ancestors has devolved to you to call you to a life of benevolence, generosity, and exertion, and in choosing your future partner you are bound, not merely to consider, whether he be pleasing to yourself, but also, whether he be disposed to act as a righteous steward of those valuable talents which you will transmit to his trust? We are not, I conceive, at liberty to point

out the situation in which we should have been happier, unless it be one that we have forfeited through our own vice or folly, and then we may allude to it as a humiliating source of self-reproach, not as a topic of discontent. Every class in society, and every individual in each class, has his peculiar trials and temptations, virtues and vices, joys and sorrows. The peevish worldling, and the religious enthusiast, looking only at a part, falsely determines the world to be the den of misery, and its inhabitants a mass of depravity. The liberal and the devout see much of real enjoyment in this life, and in their fellow creatures many remains of that original perfection in which their species was created. We indulge our passions, my love, till nothing but uninterrupted happiness will suit our craving appetites. We set out in life expecting others to pay us the

same attention which self love tells us is our due. Our fellow travellers are instigated by similar motives. Competitors for fame or fortune justle, and then become enemies, and we afterwards quarrel with our contemporaries because they too much resemble ourselves.

"Do not, my dearest Emily, dislike the world from a supposition that it has injured me. I am in most perfect charity with every creature; nor do I take to myself any merit in this; for I have nothing to complain of. My lot has been singular. I have been called to sustain hard trials. I have fallen far short of the submission which I ought to have exercised, and yet I have been commended for patience. I have often too been accused of misdeeds of which I am innocent. If my story were known, I should appear in a very different light, and must

give up the credit in one instance which I should acquire in another. I believe we are much oftener mistaken in our opinion of our neighbours, than censorious through malice. That innate attachment to what is perfect, fair, and good, which is still discernible in fallen man, impels us spontaneously to condemn error and depravity, and in our eagerness to pay what we feel to be an easy homage to virtue, we do not wait to be fully acquainted with those minute particulars which would enable us to be correct in our decision. Indeed, our finite faculties disqualify us for the office of censor, for the grave closes on many a concealed excellence and many an undiscovered crime.

"Your drawing certainly is not above mediocrity, but I am not anxious to have you excel in mere accomplishments. It is no misfortune or

disgrace to want what is termed genius, it is a dreadful offence to misapply it; for correct taste and a capacious intellect must at least affect pure moral feeling, and the artist who embodies, or the poet who conceives, what is truly beautiful and sublime, must be a practical hypocrite if he be a slave to gross or mean passions, I may further add, they must have broken through more barriers than unenlightened common-place characters; for the acute sensations which teach us to execute or to imagine what is most exalted and attractive, are all intended as preservatives from vice.

"This long letter, my dear child, is the most satisfactory proof I can give that I am well and cheerful; for you know I never prose but when my little commonweal is in perfect order. This amended state of health prevents me from feeling uncomfortable at re-

linquishing your society to him who has a natural as well as a legal right to require it. You are bound to repay his fond affection for you by making all candid allowances for his infirmities, and ministering to the wants of his declining years. If, consistently with your other duties, you can devote a few weeks to me, they shall be weeks of festival. Till then let your pen faithfully delineate your sentiments to your ever affectionate and faithful friend,

"Selina Delamore."

" The doctors (as you choose to call my medical and clerical visitors) will not recognize you under any other character than sprightly Columbine. Like the rest of my suite they continue fondly attached to you."

It is foreign to my purpose to relate all the particulars of Miss Mandeville's

London excursion. I may safely trust the imagination of every reader to supply the necessary quantity of operas, routs, balls, plays, and masquerades; beaux and belles, lords and citizens, vulgar talkers and vulgar thinkers. Of course, so great a fortune as my young heroine could not go out without gaining some heart, which, by established rule, was the lawful property of some less rich or less beautiful girl, who had long been dying for the very Adonis whom the merciless Emily vanquished with a look. The reader will conceive (especially if that reader be a young beauty) how wretched Miss Mandeville's murderous attractions made her, and how, notwithstanding her sincere determination never to disturb the peace of mankind, she went on slaughtering like the French Invincibles. Or should the eye which glances over these pages dart its un-

lustrous beams over the faded cheek of some love-lorn damsel, let her be consoled by my assuring her, that, at the end of this history, when I have married Emily to my satisfaction, I shall oblige all her discarded swains to find out the ladies who have long secretly adored them, and lead them to the hymeneal altar in succession; because all novelists and dramatists are compelled to enrich the world with a large colony of happy pairs a little inferior to the hero and heroine in wealth, virtue, and felicity. But being at this instant busy with my principal plot, I will not (though I know it is the custom) introduce long episodes, but will faithfully promise, if I should happen to fill my prescribed number of sheets without the aid of supplementary matter, that the thirteenth edition of this work shall be enriched with many new personages,

all, like the chief character, copied from real life.

I am, however, compelled to mention one conquest which Miss Mandeville made soon after her arrival in London, the young Marquis of Glenvorne; an event which has perhaps been anticipated, as I have already premised that their estates joined, and that Emily really was an engaging, unassuming, unaffected, young woman. The Marchioness very cheerfully accepted the office which she had been requested to assume, of guiding the inexperienced fair through the maze of what is so emphatically and justly called life; and this gave the young nobleman an opportunity of observing that the Devonshire heiress possessed more sweetness, delicacy, and ingenuous modesty, than he had ever met with. He soon grew enamoured, and anxious to secure the prize from a host

of competitors he hazarded an early declaration. Finding a common rejection would not discourage him from perseverance, or satisfy his mother, who (equally anxious for the connection) begged to know what objections could be made to her son, Emily frankly pleaded a pre-engagement. The Marquis was staggered at this avowal. He knew the young lady had passed her early years in almost total solitude; he also knew the neighbourhood round Mandeville castle, and judged it contained no rival formidable enough to extinguish his hopes. There was no dangerous-looking visitant who frequented Berkley square; and would any one who had pretensions to such a treasure be so heedless as to leave it unguarded! Surely, there was something jesuitical in the lady's apparent frankness? She had conceived some prejudice against him, which not choos-

ing to avow, she pleaded an objection that most men would admit was insurmountable. He felt sincerely attached to her, and he trusted a more intimate knowledge of his character would remove her distaste. He therefore begged to be still considered as a friend, and assured her, that though he would never pain her by his solicitations, he must secretly cherish hopes, and would never attempt to subdue his attachment, till he saw her in the possession of another, or heard the enviable man she so highly honoured assert his prior claim. Indeed, the Marquis had many reasons to feel confidence in the validity of his own pretensions. He was young, rich, agreeable in his person, lively and polished in his manners, and irreproachable in his conduct. He was enough in love to gratify female vanity, and yet not so desperately attached to a woman

who rejected his offers as to bring any imputation on his good sense. He was also an affectionate, attentive son, and was generally spoken of as so likely to convey happiness with rank and fortune, that the offer of his hand would not have been rejected except by one who had romantically pondered on the faultless image of perfection till she fell in love with Lord Avondel.

CHAP. VII.

"Indeed it goes so heavily with my disposition, that this goodly frame the earth seems to me a sterile promontory; this most excellent canopy the air, look you, this brave o'er-hanging firmament, this majestical roof, fretted with golden fire, why it appears no other thing to me than a foul pestilential congregation of vapours. Man delights not me,—nor woman neither."

SHAKESPEARE.

BEING, like my heroine, much attached to what is mysterious and sublime, I must now abandon all other characters and attend Lord Avondel to his paternal mansion.

Nature had formed the mind of this nobleman in one of her most capacious moulds, and all who saw him early in

life pronounced him born alike for honourable celebrity and domestic felicity. He had just obtained possession of his estate when he became attached to a lady, whose merit and beauty counterbalanced the objection which his friends might form to the smallness of her fortune; and this was still further obviated by her prudence and retired habits. Their union was determined upon, the day was fixed, and the earl set out for Avon Park to prepare for the reception of his bride. The separation was to be very short, and the intended bridegroom indulged in all those dreams of perfect felicity which a marriage, contracted under the happiest auspices, could suggest to a sanguine temper, animated by a strong attachment to a lovely amiable object. Such was Lord Avondel's situation, when he received a letter from the woman he thus idolized, to tell him

this dream of happiness was at an end, that she was imperiously compelled to renounce him for ever; and that as she should never see or hear from him more, she called upon him, as he valued his honour and his peace, to forget her, and from that moment consider himself liberated from a most unhappy engagement. He hastened to her residence; it had been only a temporary one. She and her servants were gone, and had left no clue to discover her retreat. Her letter seemed to be dictated by the deepest anguish of mind, but whether it were the anguish of guilt or of sorrow he knew not. It was a dreadful mystery, but it still remained an undiscovered one, as from that moment he had neither seen nor heard of her proceedings or abode.

A disappointment so unexpected, so inexplicable, stamped an indelible impression on Lord Avondel's character.

To petrifying surprise succeeded the deepest dejection. Somewhat of indignation, however, mingled with his regret. Among the various unfounded conjectures to which this incident gave birth, envy and censoriousness circulated a report, that passion had transgressed the bounds of virtue, and compelled the lady to a temporary retirement. Conscious of innocence, Lord Avondel silently left the improbable calumny to refute itself. But a thought shot across his mind:—could that angel countenance, where purity seemed to sit blushing at her own attractions, be indeed the vizor of specious blandishment, the treacherous appendage of a polluted person and contaminated soul? and was this obscure elopement the impulse of contrition, or the stern injunction of necessity, shuddering at impending discovery, and fearing to plunge into ag-

gravated guilt? Away with the unworthy thought! If fiends can speak and look like the holy inhabitants of heaven, what avails discernment.

Lord Avondel was not one of those meek, tranquil characters, who can fold the arms of patience over a bosom throbbing with anguish. Domestic life was now a vacuum, England was a desert. His country's banners were flying on the continent, and under their martial shade he might forget the lover in the soldier. Impelled by a powerful desire of sacrificing that life nobly which he had ceased to value, he joined the allied army, while his wrongs and sorrows furnished conversation for every tea-table in London, and rebusses and acrostics no longer pretended to involve the polite world in superlative perplexity.

I have already stated, that his merit soon obtained the distinctions which

he sought, but his bright career had nearly been interrupted. After supper one evening in the mess-room, when the bottle had circulated freely, an officer mentioned the name of the mother of Lord Avondel's recreant bride among the disreputable characters of her time. The enthusiasm of an unsubdued attachment urged him to defend the lady's reputation. High words ensued; they ended in a challenge, but the consequences were prevented by their general's ordering them both under an arrest. He removed it next morning, and told Lord Avondel, in friendly confidence, that the cause he meant to have espoused was indefensible. The horrid suggestion I have before alluded to now returned with tenfold violence. The lady who had deserted him had certainly been educated under the immediate auspices of this infamous mother. If he had subsequently associ-

ated with those women who blend the characters of good and beautiful, his native candour would have resisted the injurious suspicion, in spite of the irritation incident to such deep sorrows and unprovoked wrongs. But a camp rarely exhibits any trait of female excellence. His next residence was in a dissipated Italian court, and there he finished that dark outline of treachery, folly, licentiousness, and caprice, to which his proud and lacerated heart affixed the name of woman.

The man who has quarrelled with one half of his species is seldom on very good terms with the other, especially if he has allowed himself to believe that he is himself a being of a superior order. In reality, Lord Avondel's merit was duly appreciated by the government he served, and the society with which he associated; but his early disappointment had made him

one of those not uncommon characters in high life, who, with great apparent gentleness and urbanity, are really hard to please. He measured human nature by the standard of perfection, and whatever fell below it he beheld with pity, indifference, or contempt. He was, however, prevented by a regard for his own character, from exposing those sentiments. "He would be great, was not without ambition," and having obtained the reputation of being the best bred man in Europe, he took care to restrain every expression which would invalidate his title to that distinction. Though pride was his ruling passion, it was not pure from the mean alloy of vanity, and with all his affected preference for retirement, he was born for a public life. Its difficulties exercised his great qualities, and his noble avarice pointed not at wealth but at fame. Though

apparently indifferent to his own praises, no music was so grateful to his ear, and his dislike of others was always disarmed by flattery, or a conviction that the offender was attached to his person. So insatiable was his thirst of distinction, that it often counteracted his self-esteem, and the passion of being first in every company so far possessed him, that had some extraordinary chance placed him in a groupe of rustics, like "mighty Cæsar he would have been the best wrestler on the green," rather than have passed unregarded. Conscious of his weakness in this particular, he was scrupulous in the choice of his companions. He formed few friendships; he distrusted the world too much to have any confidant, and having been early robbed of those blessings which would have softened his high indignant spirit, his chief aim through

life was to seek and guard "the bubble reputation."

In pursuit of this fancied good, he had sacrificed much of his paternal fortune to munificent, patriotic and splendid actions. He had by this incurred the common lot of obliging some worthy and grateful people, he had also armed ingratitude and knavery with the power of doing him injuries. He suffered this latter circumstance to dwell too much upon his mind, without considering that those who aim at popularity should be prepared to encounter rebuffs. The emoluments of his appointments proved inadequate to the largeness of his soul, and as he felt equally incapable of checking the impulse of policy or beneficence, he saw for himself no future alternative but poverty or dependence. To the latter he could not submit; reputation, honour, truth, at-

tachment to his beloved country, all forbade his becoming the tool of power. The former he fancied he could bear—indeed, his personal wants were few: plain in his habits, temperate in his enjoyments, and utterly void of all expensive vices, he only wanted to be transported to those times when eulogists, content with camelion's food, crowded the bare halls of honourable poverty, to have been personally contented with "the hermit's maple dish and beechen bowl unstained with wine," to laugh at all the wants and to despise all the enjoyments of luxury.

In this disposition, he landed in England, disgusted with the world, though it had paid him for his waste of time and fortune by a large return of the coin he most valued; disgusted with ministry, but not on account of his recall; for the deranged state of his finances compelled him to wish

to be removed from that station, where the grandeur of his views and the steady integrity of his principles made him act rather like a guardian angel, devoted to the service of others, than as a mercenary adventurer bent on securing his own emolument. Neither did his dissatisfaction at government arise from disapprobation of their measures, nor yet from their not having given him some lucrative sinecure as a reward for his services. On the contrary, he approved of their general plans, and as he scorned to avow his wants, so he estimated his services too highly to believe they could be repaid by a pecuniary reward. His resentment arose from some breach of etiquette in the letters of recal, which spoke less of his deserts than he expected.

He had experienced the probity and fidelity of Sir Walter Mandeville, in

some very trying incidents in his early life, and when his conduct had been recently censured in the house of commons, the good baronet had so far combated his natural shyness and acquired indolence, as to hurry to London, with a view of influencing all his connections to unite in the defence of his friend. Certainly, his motives were more honourable than his services were apparent, but gratitude was a predominant feature in Lord Avondel's mind, and his attachments, though few, were indelible. The ennui which ill health and want of occupation had considerably increased during his voyage, was much dissipated by his residence at Mandeville castle. He saw there characters widely different from those he had lately mixed with; they required no study and little precaution. He had only to appear amiable and agreeable, and to drink largely not merely of the

draught of adulation but also of the more grateful beverage of admiration and love. For let it not be supposed that a man of Lord Avondel's penetration could long mistake the language of Emily's downcast eyes, or not feel gratified at a conquest so flattering to self-esteem. Yet the pæans of triumphant vanity could not make him insensible to the claims of honour. He knew his character would suffer in the estimation of the world, if he were suspected of having surreptitiously stolen the affections of an inexperienced, wealthy heiress, who, when she gave him her heart, seemed as much circumscribed as Eve was in her choice of Adam. He revolted from the idea of injustice to the young lady, from stooping to mean expedients to repair his fortune, and from the danger of entrusting his honour and his peace to the guardianship of a fair novice, whose extreme

simplicity of mind and manners might change into levity or folly when she mixed with the world. He determined, therefore, whatever might be the issue, to avoid all self-reproach, by preserving a manner rather paternal than amatory.

Still, however, her society pleased, and her partiality soothed, him. None of his perfections were over-looked; his exalted sentiments were never uttered to the winds if Miss Mandeville was present. She recorded all his opinions, she wept for his past dangers, she felt for all his wrongs. This really was very captivating in a woman who could give not only competency but affluence to her husband. This woman too was young, docile, gentle, almost even to his fastidious fancy beautiful. There were traits in her countenance which reminded him of one he wished he could for ever forget. He regretted

he had discovered a resemblance, and now believed it only consisted in the same general expression of sensibility and delicacy. Insensibly he grew happier. All men were not unjust, perhaps all women were not faithless, wayward, and capricious. He was awakened from this agreeable reverie by Sir Walter's proposal, and Lady Mackintosh's hinting that he was publicly suspected of a design on Emily. He no longer allowed himself to consider what was soothing to his own feelings, but what his own fame and her advantage required; and his parting advice to Sir Walter was dictated by that disinterestedness which ever marked his conduct. Nor were the praises of Lady Paulina Monthermer accidentally introduced; he was persuaded that Emily ought to forget him, and he fancied piqued vanity would be a strong auxiliary to induce a young

lady to withdraw her heart from one who would be thus copious in the praise of another.

The objects which Avon Park presented to his view excited the most soul-harrowing recollections. The last time he had been there was the day he received the mysterious letter that had given such a dark colouring to his mind. He walked over his grounds, and saw the plantations he had formed when hope buoyed him up with the most flattering expectations. "Not a shrub that he heard her admire but he hasted and planted it there." They grew and flourished as rapidly as his own joys had faded. The buds were just swelling with all the luxuriant promise of early spring; he viewed their stately growth, and then contemplated himself a ruin tending earthward, never more to be attired in the cheerful colours of joy and hope.

But where was she for whom he had formed this paradise of rural bliss, the Eve who should have walked in these groves? He blamed himself for conforming to that rigid injunction of offended honour which had forbade him to inquire her fate. She might be innocent, faithful, wretched; requiring his assistance, bewailing his neglect. If the strange impediment to which he had alluded were removed —No; impossible! Her letter told him the bar was eternal. Wandering through his plantations he endeavoured to believe the soothing predictions of Shenstone;

> The shrub and the bower and the tree,
> Which I rear'd for her pleasure in vain,
> In time may have comfort for me.

He returned to the saloon, threw himself on a sofa, gazed on the border which she had painted, and the chim-

ney piece which had been executed according to her design. To stay the tide of reflection was impossible. He allowed himself to expatiate on the visions of his early life, while all his subsequent experience deepened the conviction, that they were indeed visions of bliss worth far more than whatever ambition presented "to crown the hero's and the patriot's toils." Could they be realized? No, the bar was eternal. Poor little Emily! she was an amiable girl, but there was a sublimity, a nobleness of mind, in her who once possessed his heart. Besides, could he offer himself to the fair heiress while labouring under the weakness of a pre-attachment? "No," said Avondel, "I may be wretched but I cannot be base, and I will continue to hope that she will soon forget me." Doubtless his lordship was very sincere in that wish, and it was only an unac-

countable start of peevishness which made him exclaim, "Frailty thy name is woman," on being informed by one of his London correspondents, that the town was in daily expectation of Lord Glenvorne's being married to Miss Mandeville.

If Lord Avondel were really mortified at this intelligence, he had an opportunity of experiencing the comforts which are derived from conscious rectitude, and to abate his chagrin he had cause to congratulate himself on his escape from a woman of so much levity. His energetic mind did not long remain supine, and he struggled to subdue his regrets. Renouncing every view of improving his fortune by faction, court attendance, or matrimonial alliance, he determined to gather up the wrecks and subdue his desires, to be content with what remained. Probably Lord Avondel is not the first

nobleman who, returning to his estate after a long absence, discovers that his steward has provided him with a vast deal of employment. The earl found he had to settle embarrassed accounts, to redress the wrongs of many of his tenants, to restrain the peculations of others, to rescue his manorial rights from poachers, to establish order and impartial justice among his dependents, and to cultivate the good opinion of his neighbours. He applied himself with avidity to these pursuits, and soon made two agreeable discoveries, namely, that his affairs were rather intricate than desperate, and that wherever he went his manners would gain popularity and his character enforce respect.

Refined and upright minds only can duly appreciate the exquisite satisfaction of knowing, that they depend not on the forbearance or bounty of others

for the means of existence. The satisfaction derived from this noble consciousness, was too congenial to the feelings of Lord Avondel to permit his undivided attention to ruminate on the festering wounds of love or resentment. With all the dignity of a Cincinnatus, he turned his mighty mind to rural occupations. Much as he affected to renounce hope, he was in fact the constant dupe of expectation, being ever in pursuit of what the world did not afford, a felicity commensurate with his vast desires; and he always saw in some unattainable desideratum or future possibility, those ideal phantoms which increased his disrelish of his present enjoyments. This turn of mind had indeed one advantage, it animated him to perpetual exertion. He now resolved "to bend the stubborn genius of the plain, to form his quincunx, and to rank his vines," not

without an expectation of being admired as the Palemon "who led the rural life in all its joys and elegance, such as Arcadian song transmits," though without the most distant wish of meeting with a Lavinia.

This metamorphosis was however prevented by the arrival of two letters from London; the first was from Sir Walter Mandeville, and contained many dolorous circumstances. "This London journey," said he, "which I undertook to please you, turns out very ill. Not that I dislike town more than I expected, for I have found great benefit from a quack medicine for my asthma, and if people do laugh at me they are too civil to let me see them; but Emily dont seem contented, and she is so pale and thin that you would hardly know her. Her physician talks of ordering her to her native air, and I believe they never prescribe

air till they have tried every thing else. She's a very good girl, and if she dies I hope I shall soon follow her, for Lady Mackintosh was married last week. I never thought she could have overcome her grief for my old friend Jeremiah, but women are strange creatures, even the best of them." The letter concluded with several invectives and mournful prognostics, accompanied with a wish to see Lord Avondel once more before he died.

The other letter was from a leading member of administration, acquainting the earl, that by his Majesty's command, he informed him of the royal wish to call him to his councils, by nominating him to an honourable and efficient situation in the management of public affairs. Lord Avondel decided that each of these dispatches required a personal reply. The character of Pa-

lemon was laid on the shelf, the toils of Cincinnatus were suspended, and he alighted from his travelling chariot in Berkley square sooner than an express could have announced his intention of so doing.

He found Sir Walter anxious and agitated, but not so infirm and declining as he supposed; and from this evident exaggeration of his fears for himself he augured favourably with respect to Emily, to whom he immediately turned the conversation. "Report, my good friend," said he, "led me rather to expect a bridal summons. Lord Glenvorne's attachment is no secret, and we have fixed the happy day, and drawn the settlements, in Cumberland."

"Report," returned Sir Walter, "is the same lying gossip she was three thousand years ago. Lord Glenvorne certainly is in love with Emily, nor

will he take a denial, though he has been told she is engaged."

"Engaged? Sir Walter," said the earl, starting.

"Yes, my lord," resumed the baronet, with much apparent coolness, "to a whimsical perverse fellow, who seems to have neither love nor gratitude."

"It is impossible," resumed the nobleman, "that Miss Mandeville can devote her affections to a man of this description. Allow me to converse with her on the subject."

"With all my heart," answered Sir Walter, ringing the bell; "I tell you she saw him in a masquerade domino, and all the plain suits in the world won't drive him out of her head again."

"I cannot," said Lord Avondel, "affect to doubt intelligence so flattering; and if Miss Mandeville still believes my character deserves such a preference, I have only to assure her that

gratitude and love are as much inmates of my heart as honour and rectitude. But I hear her step, I must not wound her delicacy by taking her by surprize. Inform her I will do myself the honour of waiting on her this evening."

"By the lord Harry, it shall be settled directly," returned Sir Walter, chuckling with heart-felt satisfaction. "You are caught, general, the enemy is at the door and your retreat is cut off. All you can do is to throw yourself into that fort, while I hold a parley and treat for your surrender."

Lord Avondel had indeed scarcely time to withdraw to a recess ere Miss Mañdeville entered, and asked her uncle the reason of this sudden summons.

"You will be the death of me," said he, affecting to look terribly furious, while the broad grin of delight distended his rough features. "By Jove, I will make you marry directly. So

much about love and lovers, they will twirl my head off my shoulders."

"My dear sir," said Emily, with a faint smile, "you know my answer to Lord Glenvorne."

"Yes," returned her guardian, "but that will not do any longer. The man in the moon must come forth. You must say *who* you are engaged to?"

"Who has a right to call upon me for such an avowal?"

"Come, come, no high-flying. People, I tell you, have begun to guess. There has been a fellow with me this morning, who has found you out, and he tells me Lord Avondel is old, proud, discontented, a bankrupt in his fortunes, given up to ill humour, resolved to make you miserable."

"How could you, sir, listen to such scurrility. Why did you not order your footman to turn the low impertinent out of doors?"

"Hey-day, Emily, why you are riding post! Who but Lord Avondel himself dares to speak thus of his character?"

"Lord Avondel in London!" said Emily, shrinking with terror, "and visited you this morning?,"

"Certainly," returned her uncle. "What if he is come to prevail on you to marry his friend the young marquis, would you refuse him, girl?"

"She looked round with astonishment, and met the respectful glance of Avondel, who, unable to see her thus tormented, advanced from his retreat, not with the proud consciousness of success, but with that graceful affectation of doubt which would have reassured a mind less ingenuous and susceptible than the timid Emily; who found it impossible not to feel overwhelmed with confusion, though in the presence of him without whom the

world had appeared a dreary void. Lord Avondel hastened to relieve her distress.

"I am," said he, "indeed a suitor, but not in the cause of another. Sanctioned by your guardian's approbation, I have the presumption to ask you to forget your brighter prospects for one who pleads no desert, but a deep sense of your goodness, and a determination to devote to you that life which your favour would render worthy the name of existence."

Emily trembled, wept, leant on her uncle's bosom, and seemed only anxious to conceal her emotion, which the effort made more visible.

"Take her, my lord," said Sir Walter, "and thank you for ridding me of a great trouble. But, in my conscience I do think, if you knew the plague of these girls you would never undertake to manage them."

Lord Avondel respectfully pressed the hand which Emily silently permitted her uncle to bestow, and assured him he so well knew the excellence of his management as to be convinced he received from him an inestimable blessing.

"Somehow or other she has made me of that opinion," returned the baronet, folding his niece to his heart with warm affection. Then resuming an air of humorous asperity, "but come, Emily, now give us a little of your sex. Play the hypocrite, and tell my lord you detest the sight of him."

Lord Avondel interposed to divert Sir Walter's raillery. "I must," said he, "exercise the happy right you have conferred upon me, to insist that Miss Mandeville may be suffered to follow her own unbiassed judgment. I will only be indebted to herself for my future happiness. I invite myself to be your guest this evening, and till

then will be confident of nothing but that you are my warm-hearted advocate."

Sir Walter could only murmur, that Avondel was the most positive man in the world; but Emily raised her eyes and gave him a look of bashful gratitude, as he retired, while she felt that had this been their first interview the delicacy of his behaviour would have inspired a permanent attachment.

"So," said the earl to himself, "I am again in the high road to wedlock. Once I dreamt of congenial minds, of according habits, tempers, tastes, and ages. 'Time, who has thinned my flowing hair,' and bade the grey somewhat mingle with my manly brown, has kindly taught me lessons of moderation and prudence. I must now meditate on making provision for a proper establishment. Yet, if administration expect me to make any undue

compliances as a return for their favours, I will sooner beg my wife to settle on me an equivalent for pin-money than hold an ostensible situation without the power of acting as I wish. Emily is docile and affectionate. She possibly would prefer retirement; but it is not every woman who possesses sufficient powers of mind to make retirement palatable. He then ruminated on the prospects which his early attachment presented, and did not rouse himself from that train of thought till he arrived at the premier's. A long conference terminated in his consenting to accept the proposed office; and thus, after years of disappointment and chagrin, love, wealth, and ambition, united to choose one auspicious day to shower upon him unexpected favours.

CHAP. VIII.

"For you,
I would be trebled twenty times myself,
A thousand times more fair; ten thousand times
More rich; that to stand high in your account,
I might in virtues, beauties, riches, friends,
Exceed account: but the full sum of me
Is an unlesson'd girl, unschool'd, unpractis'd:
Happy in this, she is not yet so old
But she may learn; more happy that in this
She is not bred so dull but she can learn;
Happiest of all, is, that her gentle spirit
Commits itself to you to be directed
As from her lord, her governor, and king."

SHAKESPEARE.

MISS MANDEVILLE received her uncle's congratulations on her good fortune, mixed with reproaches for having welcomed it with so bad a

grace, and retired to her chamber almost afraid of trusting to the reality of the scene which had just past. "Is this," said she, "indeed the happiest hour of my life? have I every reason to look with exultation on my future prospects? Then why these tears? why this self-abasement? Is love so humiliating an associate to female modesty, that it is impossible for it to receive any exaltation from the dignity of its object? Had I volunteered my affections to a coxcomb I might have trembled at the idea of being sacrificed to his vanity, and becoming the mark of public ridicule; but Lord Avondel is incapable of so far abusing a generous passion as to make it minister to his self-love. He will respect the peace and honour of her who threw herself on his protection, without another wish but to promote his happiness, and to be guided by his

will. And what an infinite advantage is it to a young orphan, beset with the dangers incident to prosperity, to have such a protector, such a guide. Shielded by such wisdom and goodness no dangers can assail me. How enviable is my lot! a life of elegant, liberal retirement, passed with a companion who will inform my mind and direct my conduct! Away reserve, 'tis girlish fastidiousness, not womanly decorum. I will not add disingenuousness to any other unworthiness. Lord Avondel shall know how entirely his image occupies my heart; and while I submit all my weakness to his correction, he shall see it is my first ambition to copy his excellencies and to form my mind by his perfect model."

Emily spent the day in building fairy bowers of rural happiness and domestic tranquillity: and in confirm-

ing her resolution of being perfectly unreserved to her noble lover at their next interview. But the stability of her resolution was shaken by the earl's apologizing, with more ceremony than their present situation required, for obtruding his company that evening, without inquiring if she had a pre-engagement. Could she tell him with what infinite satisfaction she would make every plan give way to his wishes, when he so plainly intimated that he thought the laws of female decorum inviolable? She could only say that she had no engagement. Lord Avondel said something in praise of domestic habits, but added, that our social comforts must sometimes yield to the sterner obligations of public duty. He then stated the arrangements he had made with ministry, and the necessity which he felt of complying with the call of loyalty and pat-

riotism; and he painted the satisfaction which attended vast designs and fair achievements in such pleasing colours, that though Emily saw her fairy bowers of rural happiness and domestic tranquillity completely overturned, and the gorgeous palaces of ambition erected in their stead, still, as the elegant improving companion who walked by her side through the grove was only exchanged for the hero with whom she would stand on the pedestal of glory, she continued infinitely satisfied with her lot, and with all the pliant versimilitude of youth believed Agrippina partaking the renown of Germanicus, was quite as happy as an Arcadian shepherdess listening to the pipe of her beloved.

After thus giving her to understand that she must not expect a great public character to dwindle into an uxorious puppet, governed by the fears and fancies of a woman, he entered on a brief

review of his own history. He expressed his hope that he should not prejudice himself in her good opinion by owning, that when very young his heart had received a deep, nay an incurable, wound. Deep, as he never could forget the person who had inflicted it; incurable, as it had cankered his temper, transformed his character, and compelled him to be suspicious and often unjust. He related the history I have already recorded, but his narrative cast so much odium on the perfidious lady, that Emily was ashamed of herself for even supposing it could be her aunt Selina.

From this subject he turned to his fortune, and owned that a title was a troublesome appendage to one whose estate would barely supply the wants of a private gentleman. Of the emoluments of his future office he spoke like one who knew his own failing too

well to make them sufficient for their incidental expenses; and he told her he should ever consider them as the mere appendages of his station, not as a fund to assist the deficiencies of his private purse, being resolved not to remain in place one hour after honour and conscience called upon him to resign.

He told Emily that he durst not promise her the fond solicitude, the unruffled tenderness, which a mind less occupied would pay to her deserts. Would she be contented with his considering her as the spotless sacristy where he enshrined all his comforts, the partner of his glory and success, or the secure asylum to which he should flee when pursued by envy, calumny or disgrace? Was she content to renounce the advantages which her happier fortunes and blooming years might command, to divert ennui,

to soften acrimony, to nurse indisposition? All those evils had haunted him, and though he felt a delightful persuasion that the charming Emily would prevent their return, he knew his own fallibility, and he must warn her that even sweetness and tenderness like hers were not endued with omniscient power to annihilate these foul fiends, whose nature was unhappily composed of imperishable materials.

If some part of this portrait resembled the dark shades of a Rembrandt; others boasted the divine expression of a Carlo Dolci; and how much praise was due to the ingenuousness of the painter, who seemed more studious to exhibit defects than excellencies. She was not sufficiently acquainted with the world to know, that though the blazing meteor of distinguished talent dazzled every distant beholder, the steady lamp of cheerful good-hu-

mour was a more agreeable inmate. Summoning all her courage, she told Lord Avondel that a disposition which abhorred all disguise, and a fortune which derived no support from base compliances, had been from her earliest youth the objects of her profound veneration. Her acquaintance with him had confirmed this predilection, and her friends knew that her fears of being unworthy of his regard had preyed upon her spirits. "Disguise, my lord," she continued, "is therefore impossible. But, I conjure you, do not in future suppose, that because you have found me easy to win, mine is a light and wanton mind. You shall find my constancy as inviolable as my preference was precipitate. At least, never dread a rival till you can find a man like yourself, noble, disinterested, with every quality which might inspire self-esteem, yet gene-

rously refusing to take any advantage of that inexperienced heart which you must have discovered has long been yours."

The misery which Lord Avondel had suffered from female fickleness induced Miss Mandeville to be thus frank in her declaration, and the warmth and elegance of Lord Avondel's acknowledgements prevented her from reproaching herself with having gone too far. "Suffer me, my Emily," said he, "to plead the right of a long attachment, by urging you to name an early day to confirm my title to so great a treasure. I have been used to celerity in the arrangements of important transactions, and I will undertake to expedite every necessary preparation. As to settlements, my part is easy. I have only to sign such deeds as your counsel will think fit to prepare. If, however, they are dictated

by your generous uncle, I shall claim a right to object to them, should they lay me under too oppressive obligations." Emily was too humble a mistress to wish to prolong the reign of female power. She referred her lover to Sir Walter, with a confidence, she said, that her honour and fortune were safe in their care.

One of the happy circumstances which resulted from this conversation was, that Miss Mandeville felt herself at liberty to unbosom her whole heart to Lady Selina, to whom an unaccountable connection of improbabilities had lately made her be reserved. She immediately took her pen, and called for her aunt's congratulations on her approaching marriage to a man of rank and birth superior to her own, and superior also to the whole world in every noble, estimable, and engaging quality. "Can you," said she, "be-

lieve that your little foolish, fearful niece, destitute of every shining talent, and only made remarkable by the adventitious gifts of fortune, has really secured to herself for the protector and guide of her future life a nobleman on whose mind avarice and vanity never made the least impression; who has seen the beauties of every court and climate without being made a slave by their blandishments, and who really thinks an artless, well-intentioned girl a suitable alliance to unparalleled magnanimity and unblemished fame. Yes, my dear aunt, this is the object on whom I told you my affections were highly set. He has proved the reality and strength of my affection, but he has proved it in a manner equally honourable to his generosity and soothing to my delicacy. I feel dignified by the preference which I cherished, and his esteem has given

me an importance in my own eyes which I never before possessed. If you have ever seen the object of my attachment you will know him by my description, if not, I will tell you that my destined husband, in whom every good, every noble quality, is centered, is the Earl of Avondel. And my uncle confirms my choice with an enthusiasm equal to my own.

"But do not, my dearest aunt, suppose that my present attachment absorbs all those claims duty and early tenderness have inscribed so indelibly on my soul. It shall be inserted in my marriage articles, that I will spend some weeks every year at Lime Grove, I mean if the united requests of myself and my lord cannot prevail upon you to renounce your solitude, and live with us in London, where my lord's duty, as an efficient member of administration, will oblige us chiefly

to reside. You shall not deny my request on pain of my employing a resistless pleader, who has governed courts and animated senates, guided the statesman to wisdom and the soldier to victory. Nor will I allow that your resolution of hiding your virtues from the world ought to be more durable than my determination of continuing single, and living with you at Lime Grove, never allowing any one to dispute your claim to the first place in the affections of your still fondly attached and ever grateful niece Emily Mandeville."

By way of breaking the tedium of uninterrupted narrative, and to shew the world what epistolary treasures are in my possession, I shall chiefly fill this chapter with some of the correspondence which passed on this occasion. The next letter is from the Marquis of Glenvorne.

"To Miss Mandeville

"Madam,

"As my attachment to you was too ardent to allow me to attempt to subdue it while a hope remained that respectful perseverance might render it successful, so it is too disinterested to wound your generosity by persisting in a suit which I know to be desperate. The Earl of Avondel has just convinced me of the futility of every pretension which disputes his prior claim to your regard. I resign you, madam; but the pang of relinquishing what has long been the first wish of my heart is absorbed by the conviction that there has been a peculiar felicity in your fate. You have had an opportunity of selecting the worthiest, and you have also had the judgment to discern who that person was whose congenial mind and superior virtues are best adapted to your own deserts.

Nor shall my congratulations be less sincere because I fancy that my own lot might have been happier had you never seen him with whom I own contention would be vain It is my boast to possess the friendship of Lord Avondel, and my mother joins me in requesting a place in your esteem through his intercession. As the wife of my friend you will ever command the lively respect and faithful service of, madam,

"Your most devoted servant,

"GLENVORNE."

I think it is observed, that in the disease called the calenture the seaman's earnest desire for those green fields and shady bowers which he fancies would relieve his sufferings takes such possession of his perturbed mind, that he sees nothing round him but those delightful objects. Thus in the

respectful farewell of Lord Glenvorne, the enamoured Emily only saw he merits and praises of her Avondel. "How carefully" said she, "does he guard my character from indecorum. He urges a prior claim to Glenvorne, founded on our meeting at Mandeville Castle. His prudence and delicacy will thus ever shield my indiscreet precipitation. The winds of heaven can never visit my face too roughly. Surely, I am transported into some paradise. Can this be the world's chequered maze? Can this be the labyrinth in which virtue toils and suffers? I fear my delirium of full content cannot last long; I feel I am too happy!"

A few days (during which the nuptial preparations went on with equal eclat and celerity) brought her a letter from Lime Grove, which is of importance to the history.

"May every blessing attend the

nuptial engagement of my dearest Emily; I would say, complete as her own impassioned fancy paints, but as romantic expectation is often a source of disappointment and misery, I will not mislead my beloved girl, but will say, perfect as the chances of this state of mutability and the weakness of human virtue will afford. I have seen the earl of Avondel, my child, and I subscribe to your high but just encomium. Sir Walter fulfils the part of a faithful guardian by committing you to the care of a husband of such unblemished worth.

"Be not alarmed at the shortness of this letter, I have had a slight return of my complaint, and am now so nervous that I am forced to have recourse to my old recipe of perfect quietness. You know at such times I could not even bear your company.

"Let me, however, intreat you to

observe my precautionary injunctions. Do not stipulate for an annual visit to Lime Grove, nor even mention my name to Lord Avondel till you have been his wife long enough to discover every peculiarity in his temper. Even the best and wisest are not free from shades of error, and my long knowledge of the world has enabled me to discover, that very sensible men are often most averse to their wives having any very strong female friendships or confidential intimacies. Besides, I was once much talked of, and I have cause to fear Lord Avondel has imbibed the general prejudice against me. He might, therefore, even think less favourably of you, if he knew the ties which subsisted between us. I do not require you to subdue your affection for me; it is the consolation of my life, and I know our love is so deeply rooted that it may silently subsist in

our hearts till a fit opportunity permits us to exercise its duties and assert its rights. When you have long observed Lord Avondel in that near point of view which your intimate connection permits, when time and trial have convinced him of my dear child's intrinsic worth, when your inclinations and pursuits are become similar from habit, and your rooted affection rests upon a basis which cannot be subverted, it will be time enough to introduce such a friend as you, my dearest Emily, will ever find in your faithful Selina Delamore."

This letter somewhat interrupted Miss Mandeville's dreams of unruffled felicity. I do not say that it took her out of her hymeneal paradise, but it certainly led her to the mount of vision, and gave her a view of the perplexities and vexations with which the world abounds. Lord Avondel, her

all-perfect lover, to conceive a prejudice against her all-perfect aunt; the two dearest and best of beings to dislike one another;—It was a very astonishing; and, really, independently of the conviction that this mutual enmity would interrupt her own happiness, it would be a most christian office to attempt to reconcile them. At least, every principle of justice, regard to her lord's character, and attachment to his person, required her to combat her aunt's opinion, that his abhorrence of her was so rooted as to be even capable of shaking his affection for his young bride, when informed of her having been educated under Lady Selina's auspices. She could only ascribe this notion to the effects of that infirmity of which her aunt complained. Indisposition clouds the serenest mind with phantoms of spleen, and when our bodies are in such a state

that the soul quarrels with its companion, she is very apt to extend her animosity to the rest of her species, at least to believe that we are as disagreeable to others as we are to ourselves. In this persuasion Miss Mandeville addressed Lady Selina.

"My dearest aunt,

"Had you not informed me that you are unwell I should have discovered it in the style of a letter so evidently dictated by languor and dejection; and, indeed, I am now convinced of the truth of the observation which I have often heard you make, that the most elevated minds, and the happiest tempers, are not always able to resist the depression and dissatisfaction which results from a life of total seclusion. This makes me more anxious that you should change your plan; and though I dare do no other

than obey your injunctions, I must hope you will soon cancel them, and bless me with seeing the two people I best love united in that strict friendship which all who know them must believe them born to cherish for each other.

"My dearest aunt, you are above listening to the idle reports of tale bearers; whence then comes this conviction, that my lord is prejudiced against you? I am now assured you have only seen him; for if you knew his worth you would conclude, that candour, liberality, and a wise disdain of mean suspicions, are his ruling qualities. Even when he has been basely used, or in cases wherein he has witnessed very censurable behaviour, this admirable disposition does not forsake him. I can mention two instances. He will scarcely allow the extreme malevolence of Lady Mackintosh's

character, though, since I have had the courage to speak to him freely, I have told him how cruelly she used me on his account. The other case is still stronger. He has told me, that in early life he experienced a most cruel disappointment from a lady to whom he was fondly attached. The day was fixed, the settlements finished; every point was arranged, when, without any alleged misconduct on his part, or the least consciousness of having acted reprehensibly, this fickle, treacherous woman renounced him for ever. He has suffered so much from this event, that he calls it the æra of misery, producing a complete change in his temper and habits. Yet will he not divulge the name of the unworthy creature, and he assures me he has avoided making any inquiry after her, because he will not gratify the impressions of resentment by hearing of the

misery which must be her portion.

"Can you believe that a man who thinks and acts in this manner is capable of cherishing an unfounded prejudice against you? and that of so strong a kind as even to affect the artless girl who owes every laudable quality to your care? No, indeed: the black fiend melancholy, whom I and the doctors used to scare, has again been flapping her bats wings over Lime Grove. You have been living by yourself, my dearest aunt. Humility has read you too many homilies. You want me to put you in mind of your virtues and talents. Indeed, I will soon see you, and I hope you will allow me to be better qualified for your eulogist now I have lived in the world, and seen virtues indisputably of a superior cast. In every thing Lord Avondel realizes those ideas of magnanimity and honour which many fancy

are fabulous. He has refused the nuptial settlement which our counsel say is always made by heiresses on their bridegrooms. He says he is become unexpectedly wealthy by felling some timber which really encumbered his estate, and by compelling his steward to disburse his peculations. He hinted somewhat of indecorum in such an arrangement, and that word always silences me. But he has intreated me to place my name as patroness of two charities, one in the north, the other in London, and to accompany my signature with magnificent donations. He only permits himself to enjoy the income of my fortune. He will allow of no contingent settlements, to vest the perpetuity in him, and he has angrily forbidden my uncle to act upon his intention of bequeathing him the Mandeville estate. He assigns as his reason, that such a perversion of pro-

perty would only give his enemies an opportunity of scandalizing his honour, as it would compel him to do an ostentatious, and therefore equivocal, act of justice, by immediately restoring it to the lineal heirs.

"Even in comparatively trivial arrangements, Lord Avondel acts by the same lofty principles. He has presented me with his mother's jewels. He calls me his Emily now, "My Emily," said he, "they are a parsimonious gift considered as the present of a nabob, but I had no passion for diamonds, and you will value these as coming from unsoiled hands, and from their having adorned women of illustrious birth and untainted honour. Their last possessor was eminently graced with all the passive virtues." His eyes shone with tears as he spoke. How admirable is filial piety, how does it confirm all my hopes of happiness!

"He told me they were new set about twenty years ago for an event which never happened. He had then exercised his own taste, he wished me now to consult mine in alterations. I shall wear them as they are, for the style is extremely elegant; and among them are an aigrette and soltaire so like those worn by you in the miniature you gave me at Lime Grove, that I must preserve what will make me fancy I resemble you, ere indisposition and sorrow anticipated the ravages of time in your fine countenance.

"My uncle (worthy man) is almost frantic with ecstacy. He says he can live without me, as joy has cured the gout and asthma, and almost removed the cannon ball from his shoulder. He gives up his house in Berkley-square to my Lord, and retires to Mandeville castle immediately after the ceremony. We are to make an excursion to the

North to introduce me to my lord's connections, but we must not be long absent, as the winter will call him to the active discharge of the important duties of his high office. I sometimes doubt my own capability of appearing with propriety as the wife of a great public character; but I shall have such a supporter as few can boast. Perhaps you will smile when I tell you, that I am already exalted into a very sublime dignified personage. The respect and deference with which my lord treats me, makes my acquaintance consider me in a different point of view from what they used to do, and I really feel that I am no longer an unimportant romantic girl. Lucy Selwyn objected to the dress I had chosen to be presented in, and recommended one with a fuller pattern. She applied to my lord as umpire, and insisted that carnations on a lilac ground looked no-

bler than lilies of the valley on pale blue: 'Tis a point,' said he, 'of which I cannot judge, yet surely innate nobleness is best contrasted by simplicity.' He smiled when I said I was very partial to woodland lilies.

"The other evening Captain Brazely made some impertinent remarks on my veneration for wisdom and experience. I knew how much the maxims of false honour are obeyed, and I trembled lest my lord should hear him. But true courage is not ostentatiously querulous. 'Miss Mandeville,' said he, 'the captain pays you a compliment, but it requires a little explanation. It implies that, as you are certain of being most valued by those who have seen and reflected most, so you shew a just confidence in yourself by endeavouring to secure their approbation.' He then conversed with the greatest ease with the captain about his own affairs,

and the coxcomb now boasts that he is in high favour with Lord Avondel, whom he styles the best bred man in Europe.

"I know custom requires common-place gallantry from lovers, but in my absence he speaks of me with a sort of holy reverence, as if all I did or said was in truth 'wisest, virtuousest, discreetest, best.' He thus gives me an elevation of character which I fear I shall never support, I mean when he is not present, and the world has too many claims upon him to allow me his uninterrupted society. Thus am I led back to the wish with which I commenced this epistle. My dearest aunt, come and guide the orphan your tenderness saved from an early grave. You cherished my feeble frame, you corrected my early errors; come and render me worthy of the affection, and certain of securing the esteem, of

the faultless Avondel. Such, in spite of your intimations, I know I shall ever consider the man who in a few days will be the husband of your ever grateful and happy

EMILY MANDEVILLE."

I am now forced to acknowledge, that the something which nobody liked, which every body saw, and which no soul could account for, in Lady Selina, induced her to behave in a most singular way on receiving this letter; and as I am not bound to write a chapter of tears and sighs, or to analyze all her feelings, I must give her up to those who assert, that the tidings of a happy marriage operate on an old maid exactly like vinegar poured upon nitre. As I wish her, however, to preserve some small portion of esteem, I will not have it supposed, that though she might long to be a countess herself,

she actually hated Emily, or wished her the future evils which single sybils are always said to discover on these occasions, by a faculty similar to second sight. Her niece's letter determined Lady Selina in two points, first to avoid the earl of Avondel, and next to take the earliest opportunity of urging the fair bride to restrain her exuberant sensibility. If my readers can ascribe these resolutions to any other motive than ill-nature, envy, or obstinacy, I will compliment them for possessing an extraordinary share of candour and discernment.

I pass over the bridal ceremony, to which only the pen of a Richardson could do justice. Suffice it to say, as long a string of carriages attended, and those carriages filled with as many noble lords and beautiful ladies, as accompanied Sir Charles Grandison and his interesting Harriet to the al-

tar. After as elegant a dejune as ever the Morning Post immortalized, the happy pair were bound in the indissoluble bond, and, according to immemorial custom, set off in a chariot and six, with four out-riders stuck round with white favours, no matter whither. The event was announced in all the public prints. The bride's paraphernalia were exhibited at the most celebrated milliner's, nuptial presents were distributed, and cards sent out in due form. Thus far Lord Avondel proved a strict conformist to the manners of the world, for he thought it unwise to provoke hostility by a pointed disobedience to its established forms.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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